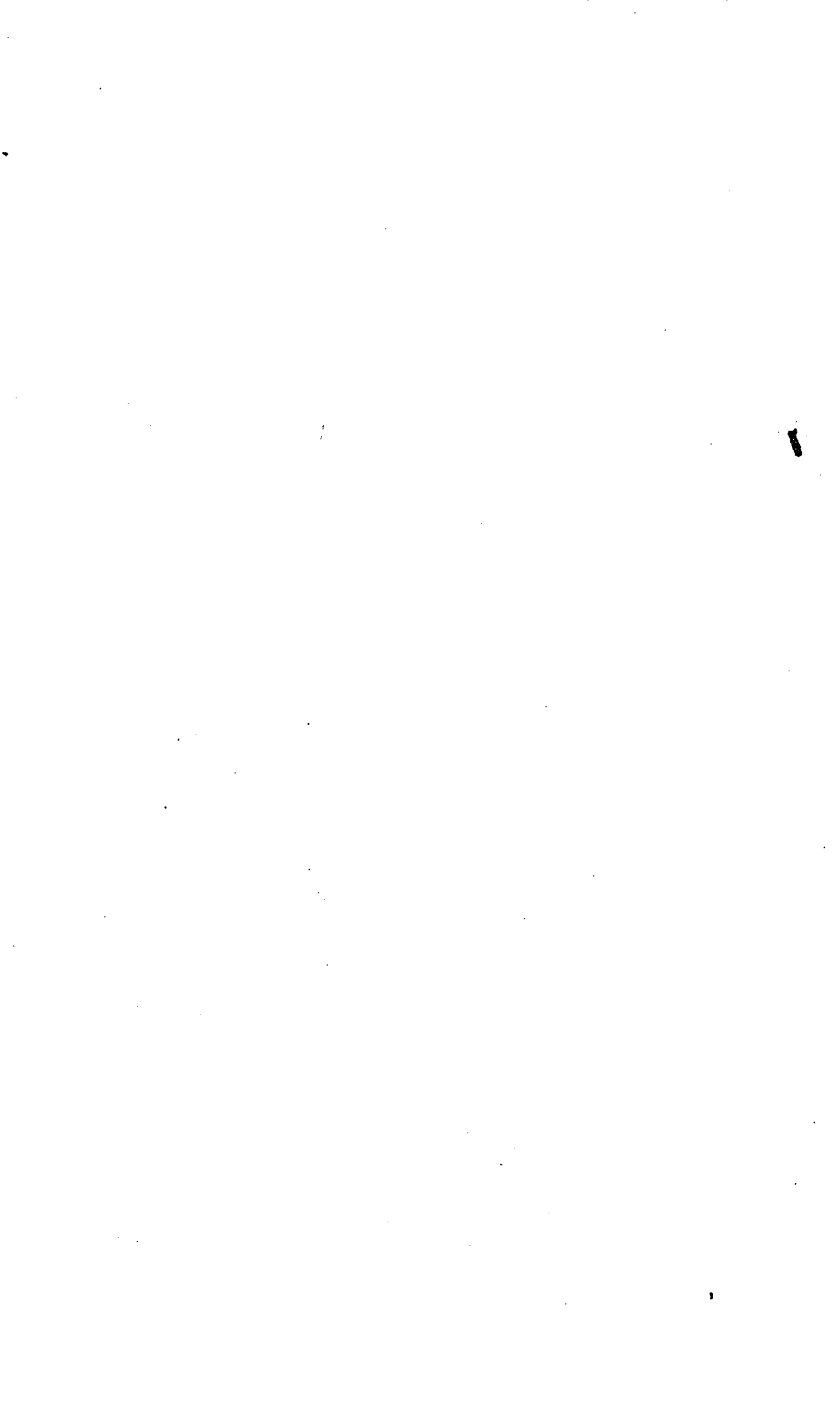


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# PHILIPP JACOB SPENER.

*Francis Frederick* BY  
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AND

ONE OF THE SIX PREACHERS OF CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL.

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## PREFACE.

THE Life of Philipp Jacob Spener is not only the Life of a very noble servant of God, rousing and stimulating Christian people by the brightness of his individual example; it is also the history of a very remarkable revival of Christian life in a communion dry, barren, and apparently dead, but in which the effects are at this day clearly visible of the stirring of the Holy Spirit of God two centuries ago.

And it also brings into distinct view the state of the Lutheran Communion in the century after Luther died, its great degradation and its great capabilities; showing us in this way how great a debt of thankfulness we ourselves owe to God, that we belong to a branch of the Catholic Church which, by His providence, passed through the crisis of the Reformation, without snapping its continuity with the past, and being compelled to construct for itself some substitute for those means and ministries of grace which we receive by inheritance from our forefathers.

## CHAPTER I.

Spener's Birth.—The Thirty Years' War and its effects upon Germany.—Spener's Boyhood.—State of the Lutheran Communion.—Spener settled at Strassburg.—His love of Heraldry.—Marriage.—Removal to Frankfurt-on-the-Main.

PHILIPP JACOB SPENER was born at Rappoldswiller in Upper Alsace on the 13th of January, 1635.

The time and the place were alike significant of the clouds which were to overhang the early years of the child. The "Thirty Years' War" had already run sixteen years of its terrible course, and it was still to continue for fourteen years more. But lately it had changed its nature. Begun as a religious war, for the defence of the rights and liberties of the Protestants in Bohemia, and afterwards extended in the same spirit throughout Germany, it had lately lost its religious character, and had become almost exclusively political. The victory at Lützen, in November, 1632, had cost the life of Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden, and the same year had already seen the death of Tilly, the priest-warrior, at the passage of the Lech.

The disappearance of these two personages from the scene made other events inevitable, which at the commencement of the war would have been considered impossible. The Protestants, having no longer the powerful support of the King of Sweden, began to seek the alliance of "the Eldest Son of the Church," the Roman Catholic Louis XIV, and it was the policy of Richelieu to grant them what they sought. The war was henceforth no longer a struggle of opposing religions, but of contending statesmen; the object was not religious liberty or ascendancy, but the attainment of political power. And the entrance of France into the contest brought the French armies into Alsace and Lorraine, which were then German, as they have again, after the interval of more than two centuries, become once more in our own day.

Spener's native country, therefore, began now to taste the horrors which had for years been the lot of a large portion of the rest of Germany. We, who live in times when wars, if murderous in their character, are at all events short in their duration, can hardly picture to ourselves the longdrawn agony of a contest such as was then raging, and the very name of the Thirty Years' War marks it as one of the blackest chapters of human



history. A whole generation of men and women grew up in Germany without ever having known the blessings of peace; their infancy and youth were passed, and maturity reached, either amid the horrors of civil war, or at all events in the endurance of its hardships, and in the daily dread of its actual presence in their own homes. It is not easy to estimate what must be the effect upon the character of a boyhood spent in such an atmosphere, and until the age of fourteen Spener knew no other. A youth already by natural disposition inclined to be thoughtful, and to ask the meaning of things, would be driven to consider what could come of it all, whether there was any hand which held the clue to the tangle, any will which could control the confusion, and bring order out of the chaos.

Spener's father, a native of Strassburg, was in good circumstances, and one of the Councillors of the reigning Count of Rappolstein. The young Philipp was, from his birth, devoted by his parents to the service of the Church; a practice which was then very frequent, though it often happened that the after history of children so devoted was a miserable contradiction of the hopes of their infancy. In this instance, however, those hopes were abundantly fulfilled. The child

displayed remarkable power of mind, an ardent love of truth, and a susceptibility of deep religious feeling, which seemed to justify the brightest expectations of his parents. When in mature age he looked back upon his boyhood, he could call to mind no particular fault or boyish scrape; he remembered only the remorse which tortured him when he had yielded to the temptation of taking part in a children's dance, and which caused him ever after to shrink from such amusements. A certain somewhat morbid sensibility of conscience was one of his characteristics through life; yet his later history forbids us to believe that, even as a boy, he can have been deficient in the sterner virtues of decision, courage, and steady resolve.

But the inner life seems from the first to have been dominant over the outer, and things unseen were vividly present to him. One of the first events which deeply impressed his mind was the death of his godmother, the Countess of Rappolstein, who had always shown him great affection, and had warned him earnestly against the dangers and temptations of youth. On her deathbed she had him summoned to her presence, and although, when he arrived, illness had already deprived her of the power of speech, and he could only

guess what she wished to say, yet the memory of that hour sank deep into his heart, and made him more resolved than ever to abjure the world, and whatever he considered to be in the least degree tainted with its vanity.

The reading of the Bible and books of devotion was already his favourite occupation, and henceforward his time was more than ever employed in this way. Arndt's "True Christianity" became to him what it has been to so many German Christians during the last three centuries, a treasury of devotion, and a constant source of spiritual strength; and to this he added several books of a similar kind translated from the English, particularly Bailey's "Practice of Piety," part of which he turned into German verse, and so made his first beginning as a hymn-writer.

Spener was now fourteen, and while he was thus struggling to sustain and fan into flame the spark of his inner life, the spiritual life of the Lutheran Community in Germany was at its very lowest ebb. The Thirty-Years' War was just reaching its close, and its effects upon religion were as desolating as they had been upon the moral and social state of the country. A war which had been commenced in the name of religion, and had wholly lost its religious character, left

upon men's minds an impression of hollowness and unreality, a disbelief in all abiding truth, a suspicion and dislike of all that had the appearance of being earnest and sincere, a doubt of all human honesty. Party spirit, which had already for three generations been choking and strangling the life of faith, now seemed to have almost completed its work of destruction. Men hated and reviled, persecuted and cursed one another, for the sake of words and shibboleths which had scarcely a point of contact with the faith of the heart, except in the furious passions which they aroused. If any solitary divine, like George Calixtus of Helmstadt, endeavoured to pour oil upon the waters and to bring men together, he did but draw upon himself the hatred of all.

The civil power interfered, but only with the result of making matters worse. Germany never enjoyed the great blessing, which was almost peculiar to England, of a reformation of the Church, accomplished by the Church itself, as an organized whole. In Germany the Reformation was accomplished against the will, and in spite of the efforts, of the ecclesiastical authorities, and the Protestant communities depended upon the favour of princes for existence and toleration. For this they

paid the heavy price of their liberty ; and it became before long a recognized doctrine that the Episcopal supervision of the Church of God belonged of right to sovereign princes, and any independence which remained was derived solely from the power of public opinion. The arbitrary caprice and continual interference of the civil power became a fruitful source of corruption. And this was increased, rather than diminished, by the peace of Westphalia, in 1648. For henceforth each of the petty princes who ruled the several States of Germany became absolute master of the outward fortunes, and of the internal economy, of the Protestant community within his dominions.

The Protestants themselves were divided into the two rival and hostile communions of Lutherans on the one side, and Calvinists, or "Reformed," on the other. Well was it for the members of either communion when the prince under whose sway they lived belonged to the opposite. They might meet with a little persecution ; but the air of persecution is bracing, and at all events the development of their own internal life was left comparatively free. Throughout Germany religion was tending more and more to become a mere matter of State machinery, and the living

spirit which had animated it was fast departing from it. Genuine Christian life found its utterance here and there in a singer like Paul Gerhardt, a writer like Christian Scriver, or a preacher like Joachim Stoll, but sermons had become nearly everywhere mere intellectual essays, hymns mere moral songs, religious literature mere polemical invective. The "Formula of Concord," which was the external bond of all Lutheran communities, was practically exalted to a level with Holy Scripture, and both alike were treated not as living words, but as dead forms, useful chiefly as a test of the orthodoxy of suspected divines. A spirit of love and gentleness and forbearance in religious controversy came to be looked upon as a disgrace and a reproach, and the study of Theology was more and more left to those whose natural disposition led them to find pleasure in perpetual strife.

It was in the midst of this dreary atmosphere that we left young Spener struggling hard to keep alight in his own heart the lamp of faith and love, and to keep himself unspotted from the world. A kind Providence sent just then to Rappolstein, as Court Preacher to the Count, that same Joachim Stoll, who has just been mentioned as one of the few who were doing what they could to

stem the tide of corruption; and the people of Rappolstein had the rare opportunity of listening to sermons which dealt with life as well as dogma, and were likely to leave a practical mark upon those who heard them. The young Philipp was put under his charge as pupil, and afterwards the connexion between them was drawn closer by Stoll's marriage with Spener's sister. Meanwhile he taught him Latin and Greek, and helped him in his favourite studies of history and geography. But the abiding impression which he left upon his pupil's mind was that which he made as a catechist and a practical preacher, in which respect he was such a striking contrast to all others with whom Spener had as yet been thrown. The conscientiousness with which Spener afterwards continued to follow one of his rules deserves to be noticed as a characteristic trait. He not only regularly attended divine service on Sundays, but carefully abstained on that day from every kind of study which had not a direct reference to the practice of piety. Even the study of the Bible was to have a sort of Sunday consecration. The soul of Theology, that is to say, meditation and prayer, was to be cherished on that day more than on any other, while its body, the study of language, history, doctrinal

systems, was reserved for the working days of the week.

But his education was not confined to Strassburg. He spent some time at Basle and at Geneva, and mixed with men of reputation as scholars and divines, and returned home bringing with him an enlarged knowledge of men and things, a power of looking at both sides of a question, and a willingness to appreciate the value of various views of religious truth. At length, in 1663, we find him settled in the home of his youth as preacher at Strassburg, without cure of souls, and as lecturer upon history and geography in the University.

But our conception of human character is never complete if it is formed only from those graver pursuits and occupations which are the professed and recognized object of any person's life. We must also know something of the lighter thoughts which most frequently fill his leisure hours, the half-serious occupations towards which the mind gravitates when the strain of earnest purpose is somewhat relaxed. Spener's hobby was heraldry. In the intervals left by history and geography he was busy with genealogies and coats of arms. He was familiar with the innumerable quarterings and family alliances even of Ger-



man counts and princes. And this continued even when he was the leader of a great religious movement and the observed of all observers. This is worthy of notice, not merely for Spener's own sake, but because the peculiarities of his individual character, and this among the rest, became to a remarkable extent the heritage of those who followed his teaching and afterwards bore the name of Pietists.

Spener himself was perfectly aware that, in spite of his deeply sympathetic and affectionate nature, he was more likely to repel the external world by his gravity and reserve, than to attract them by any affability or cheerfulness of manner. An amusing proof of this occurred the year after he settled as preacher and lecturer at Strassburg. His mother, who had herself married a second time, urged strongly upon him the blessings of marriage and the assistance which the constant companionship and cheerful society of a wife would be to himself. She went further, and enlarged upon the merits of a particular young lady, Susanna Erhardt, daughter of one of the town councillors of Strassburg. But for a long time he refused to be persuaded, declaring that a young and joyous spirit like Susanna would be chilled to the heart by his

cold reserve and seriousness, and that, if he must needs marry at all, it would be better for him to look out for some widow who had lived with a moody husband. It would be easier, he thought, for such a one to bear with his ways. Although, however, there never was a firmer soul than Spener's in asserting a religious conviction, or maintaining a Divine principle of action, he was singularly open to the influence of others in matters upon which the conscience did not directly speak. Accordingly before very long we find that his mother had her way, and he became the husband of Susanna ; and in later life, in a fragment of autobiography, he gives thanks to God for having given him, as the partner of his life, one who so truly loved him ; and he dwells in glowing terms upon her good qualities, mentioning particularly her thrifty house-keeping and the perfect confidence with which he could make over to her, and to "the preceptors," the education of their children. Perhaps it would have been better if his own share in this last duty had been larger.

Two years after this, in his thirty-first year, he received from the city of Frankfort-on-the-Main a summons to become its chief pastor and president of the College of Ministers. The summons was not of his own

seeking. It was a fixed principle in his mind that a minister of the Gospel ought not to apply for any post whatever; he must be summoned by a Divine call, and the first and indispensable test of this is that the offer comes freely, and without any action on his own part, from those who have the legal right of appointment. Secondly, he must possess the qualities necessary to fulfil the duties of the post; and of this he is not to be himself the judge, but he is to leave the decision to others. And thirdly, there must be a distinct prospect of an enlarged sphere of activity in the Kingdom of God; and in estimating this, the consideration of increased income is to be allowed no weight whatever. In the call to Frankfort, the first and the third of these conditions seemed to be completely satisfied, but about the second he felt great scruples of conscience. He was asked, in his thirty-first year, to preside over a body of men, some of whom were bordering on old age. He had always dreaded the responsibility of the cure of souls, and at Frankfort a large population would be placed under his charge. Besides, he could scarcely bring himself to leave a place like Strassburg, with which all his old affections were entwined, and where he occupied a position of so much

usefulness. The question was one which he dared not decide for himself, and which he would not lay before his friends, dreading that they might allow themselves to be influenced by considerations of mere worldly advantage.

At last he wrote a letter to the town council of Strassburg, telling them of the offer which had been made to him, explaining the reasons for and against his accepting it, and leaving the issue in their hands. The council called to its assistance the theological faculty of the University, and both agreed in the decision that the call was from God and must be obeyed. Spener recognized in this the command of God Himself, and no longer hesitated to act upon it. On the 3rd of July he preached his farewell sermon in the Minster from Psalm cxix. 52—"I remembered Thine everlasting judgments, O Lord, and received comfort."

It is impossible to avoid admiring the anxiety of Spener to keep himself free from all considerations of self-interest, and simply to follow what he considered to be the indications of the will of God. At the same time one cannot but recognize here something of the same weakness which has been already noticed. No one can lay upon others the

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responsibility of his actions; and, whatever their counsel may be, the ultimate decision, with the praise or blame which may attach to it, belongs to himself alone.

## CHAPTER II.

Spener Chief Pastor at Frankfort-on-the-Main.—His mode of preaching.—Revival of Catechizing.—And of Confirmation.—Devotional Classes.—The “*Pia Desideria*.”—Horbius.—Schism at Frankfort.—Spener and the Syncretists.—Treatment of the Jews.—His widening sympathies.

ON the 20th of July, 1666, Spener arrived at Frankfort-on-the-Main, at a time when pestilence was raging in the place.

As chief pastor in one of the principal cities of Germany, he now occupied a most conspicuous position, and many eyes were turned to watch the course taken by one who had been called at so early an age to so important a post. No one however felt the greatness and responsibility of the office which he held more strongly than himself, and he immediately commenced a course of action which required the utmost wisdom and firmness, as well as courage, but which he never afterwards forsook. While paying in outward things the utmost respect to the regulations of the civil power, and treating his colleagues in the ministry with the most unwearied Christian love and courtesy, he was

yet determined to carry out, in the duties of his office, those principles which he had long seen to be true.

His sermons immediately began to attract attention. In preaching he aimed at the utmost simplicity of expression. He enforced the necessity of a living faith, showing itself in the practice of a holy life; and he laboured to destroy the widespread trust in a lifeless orthodoxy, which was leading so many to ruin. His first sermon, on the text, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ," was the type of all that he afterwards preached, and the astonishment which it created was measured by its entire divergence from the theological spirit of the age, and from all that was, at that time, ordinarily heard in the pulpit.

As was usual at that period, his sermons were of considerable length, but they were always previously written, word for word, upon paper and committed to memory. His memory was naturally retentive, and it was usually sufficient for him to read over what he had written three times, once immediately after writing, once on Saturday night, and once on Sunday morning before service. He used to regret that he had not the power of compressing a large amount of matter into

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a few concise and pregnant sentences, but found himself compelled to become discursive, and to spend many words in the expression of what some other persons would have conveyed in very few. But it may be doubted how far this was a real fault. Possibly for a general audience his sermons would be all the more effective on this account. The words of a book, over which the reader may pause and ponder, may well be few and suggestive, while the style of the same person, when preaching upon the same subject, should be comparatively diffuse.

Custom, which, like most other customs in the Lutheran Communion at that time, had stiffened into an almost iron rule, forbade the preacher to choose the subjects of his sermons as he pleased, or as he might think most edifying, and compelled him to take his text from the Gospel of the day. And, partly no doubt in consequence of this, men's knowledge of the Bible had come to be of the most partial and fragmentary kind. They were familiar with the words of the portions which they heard read on Sundays, and particularly with the Sunday Gospels which were over and over again preached upon, but of the Bible as a whole, and of the connexion of the various parts of even one book, they knew

little or nothing. Spener determined to relax these bonds; burst them he could not. He continued to preach upon the Gospel of the day, and he prefixed to his sermon an "Exordium," in which by degrees he went through most of the Epistles of St. Paul verse by verse in their connexion. His sermons became longer than ever; but he gained his point. His audience was always large; and each of his hearers was obtaining a more complete knowledge of Scripture than he had ever had before.

His style was marked by simplicity and earnestness; no flowers of rhetoric, but hearty directness of expression. Many were attracted to hear him by the mere love of novelty, many by a higher interest, some certainly by a sense of the living power of his words. Yet those who prized his preaching most would perhaps have found it difficult to express to themselves or to others what it was that they valued so highly. One chief peculiarity of Spener's preaching was his treatment of Scripture; yet Scripture was frequently appealed to by others, and was invariably assumed by all to be the fountain of ultimate authority. But the spirit and the manner and the object, with which this was done, were all different. The one looked upon

Scripture as a storehouse of arms for the defence of a theological position, or the destruction of an opponent's arguments. The other looked upon it as an armoury against the world, the flesh, and the devil, or as a storehouse of food for the hungry, or of medicine for the sick. A "form of sound words" is indeed essential to the Church's life, and controversy is sometimes necessary for the defence of the faith. But in Germany, in the days of Spener, it might well be said that "the dust of systems and of creeds" was choking and destroying the life of the spirit; and the work of a true evangelist was to diminish if possible the strife of tongues, and rouse men's minds to a sense of the necessity not of an orthodox creed, but of a living faith.

Another means, besides preaching, upon which Spener relied for the accomplishment of his great purpose, was the revival of the catechizing of the young. This had not indeed fallen completely into disuse at Frankfurt, but it had shared in the withering influence which was weakening or destroying every form of Christian effort. Spener determined to make it a reality. He endeavoured to carry his colleagues with him, but they were slow to move, and looked upon the whole matter with very different eyes from his, and

he was obliged to devote himself most especially to the work. By degrees he gained, and succeeded in keeping, the interest of the children, and by-and-by grown people began to take their places among the boys and girls, to be instructed in the principles of Christian truth; and they confessed that they felt themselves to learn more from one of Spener's catechizings than from a dozen sermons preached by any one else.

Yet, like all good catechists, Spener was painfully conscious of his own shortcomings, and deeply felt the difficulty of his work. One day a stranger, the Baron von Helmont, happening to be in Frankfort, attended the catechizing. When the service was over he sought an interview with Spener, shook his head, and "doubted how far he had managed to get the children's heads into their hearts." It was a kind and perhaps a just rebuke. Spener had not yet attained perfection in what is probably the most difficult branch of the work of the ministry of teaching. He redoubled his efforts, and before his death his catechizing had made a mark upon the religious life of Germany, which has not yet been effaced. In catechizing he could without offence give detailed instruction in truths which lie at the very foundation of the

Gospel, but which for that very reason are too much taken for granted, and too little enforced, in the pulpit. He was training up for Frankfort a future generation of men and women possessed of an intelligent knowledge of what they believed as religious truth, and who had never been allowed to lose sight of the bearing of the truth upon every hour and moment of their life.

But besides this seed which he was sowing for the future of Frankfort, his catechizings were attracting increasing attention elsewhere, and being largely imitated in other towns. Ten years after his coming to Frankfort he published his "Simple Explanation of Christian Doctrine according to Luther's Small Catechism," a work which contained in the form of question and answer the substance of his catechetical course. This book, and another which followed it a few years after, "Catechetical Tables in Latin," produced a considerable sensation in the religious world in all parts of Germany, and they became generally used as text-books of catechetical instruction. If Spener's services had ended with this revival of the almost disused instruction of the young, he would have deserved the endless gratitude of the Lutheran Communion.



Besides this, however, another wholesome practice owed its revival to Spener. The rite of Confirmation had, before the Reformation, been exalted to the rank of a Sacrament, and various superstitious notions and usages had clustered round it. At the Reformation it was rejected as a Sacrament, and an attempt was made in the Lutheran Communion to substitute for it a rite which was intended to be of a more evangelical nature, consisting of the simple laying on of hands preceded by catechizing. The rejection, however, of the Episcopal order in Germany seriously impaired the significance and benefit of all rites which had depended upon Bishops for their performance. And although the new ceremony was for a time continued in various places, both in the Lutheran and the Reformed Communions, it had never taken any deep root in men's minds, and it had gradually fallen into almost entire disuse. Very soon after Spener's arrival in Frankfort, he revived it in that city; and from that time its re-introduction in other places became so rapid that it seemed as if a universal desire existed for it. One place after another adopted it in various States of Germany; the Governments approved, and it was binding by law.

That when a young person, who has been

baptized in infancy, attains to years of discretion, some such rite as Confirmation is desirable, if not necessary, must be clear to every mind; and it is not surprising that it should commend itself everywhere by its own evident fitness. The candidate must, one would hope, himself desire to come forward openly, and say for himself, now that he is instructed in its meaning and obligation, the promise which was made in his name in his unconscious infancy, and also to receive directly for himself the assurance of the new birth from above, and the promised grace of God. And according as one side or the other of the ceremony is prominent in the minds of different persons, the kind of value which they attach to it will vary. To some it will chiefly seem a precious opportunity for pointed instruction, and the stirring of the heart of the candidate to a new resolve, while others will rather see in it the Hand of God stretched out to bless in the Ordinance of His Church, and a channel for the bestowal of His grace.

Among the Protestant Communities of Germany the former view, as might have been expected, predominated, almost to the entire exclusion of the latter. Spener, however, while strongly sympathizing with this feeling of the value of the Ordinance as a means of

edification, and opportunity of instruction, saw in it also much more than this. According to him Confirmation should be looked upon as a renewal of the Baptismal Covenant on both sides. It has an awakening significance, causing and enabling the recipient to become conscious of the grace of Baptism, while this at the same time is necessarily increased and "confirmed" by the Holy Spirit imparted in the laying on of hands. Its reference to the congregation receded in his mind entirely into the background, and he did not therefore insist upon its publicity. In this, as in so many other things, we are continually reminded, in studying the history of the Lutheran Communion, of the grievous loss which it sustained by the snapping, at the Reformation, of the continuity of its living Church organization, and of the great debt of gratitude which we ourselves owe to God for the passage of the English Church through the same crisis, and the securing for it of the blessings of the Reformation without the same harm and loss. Spener, if he had been a Presbyter of the English Church, might have had much to do in rousing his fellow-churchmen to a living use of the means of grace which they possessed, but he would not have been compelled to fashion for them as near a sem-

blance as he could of a rite which they had lost.

Hitherto Spener had confined himself more or less to the beaten path. Any attention which had as yet been drawn to his name was caused simply by the loving earnestness and fervent zeal with which he threw himself into the acknowledged work of the Christian ministry, and the influence which his bright example exercised upon others. It was impossible, however, that this should continue without developing itself further. He had roused a spirit which could neither be controlled, nor entirely guided, by himself. His work was certain to call into existence new forms of Christian life and energy, which would catch the notice of the outside world, be branded as novelties, and become objects of reproach as well as praise.

The first beginning was as follows. Three years after he came to Frankfort, on the sixth Sunday after Trinity, he preached as usual on the Gospel of the day. His text was, "Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." In strong and burning words he exposed the self-righteous Pharisaism of the time, with its trust in a lifeless orthodoxy and outward

Church ceremonial, and pressed upon his hearers the necessity of an entire repentance and change of heart. It was one of those sermons which cannot possibly be heard with indifference. The claim of the Kingdom of Heaven to the entire allegiance of man was distinctly asserted, and men upon whom such a claim was made must either yield themselves willing servants of the Voice of God, or else set themselves in distinct opposition to it.

Accordingly, a sifting process commenced at once. Some were indignant at being so abruptly startled out of their dream of orthodox security, and declared loudly that they would never come to hear him again. Others, were touched at the heart by the truth of what he had said, and were only anxious not to lose the impression which had been made upon them, but to learn at once something more of the life of God in the soul of man. He was neither surprised nor disappointed at the anger of the first, nor could he be otherwise than most thankful for the impression which his words had made upon the second. Anxious to strike while the iron was hot, he preached again and again, in more uncompromising language than ever, upon the falsehood and rottenness of a faith which does not work by love, and upon the absolute necessity of a life

of inward holiness and outward activity in the Kingdom of God. In doing this he more than once dwelt upon the benefits which might arise from a continuous and careful study of the Holy Scriptures, and from the mutual intercourse of Christian men for directly religious purposes, with one another and with their ministers.

Such words found a ready hearing from persons who were longing already for sympathy and encouragement in their endeavours after the Christian life. The result was that here and there in private houses meetings began to be held on Sunday afternoons, in which the morning sermon was recalled to memory and talked over, a portion of the Bible was read in common, and conversation followed of a pious and practical nature.

These meetings again were connected with a feeling which was already gaining ground under the influence of Spener's teaching, that the ordinary intercourse of society was too much tainted with the world, that the general tone of conversation was frivolous, and all mention of spiritual things practically impossible. Several of Spener's friends had suggested to him the possibility of forming a small society of religious people, who might meet together for more serious and instruc-

tive purposes. It was obvious that in many hearts a void was beginning to be painfully felt, which could only be filled by frequent and sympathetic intercourse with others, whose aims were equally high, and who were equally longing after more perfect communion with God.

Spener was much more than willing to receive the suggestion which was made to him, and to encourage the movement, which had been begun without his cognizance. He could not, however, shut his eyes to the fact that, on the one hand, such meetings were extremely liable to abuse, and might be the source of grievous evil as well as of good, and on the other hand, they might open the door to much suspicion and misrepresentation from without. On this account he determined to be present and to take part in them himself, and for some time they were held in his own study. His colleagues in the ministry not only knew and did not oppose what he was doing, but at first they were not unfrequently themselves present at the meetings. He looked upon the matter, however, as one of an entirely private nature, and he did not therefore consider it necessary to ask the formal sanction of the Government. But the course he was taking was perfectly

well-known to all the four "Scholarchs," as those members of the Council were called, who were entrusted with the control of ecclesiastical affairs; and one of them was only hindered by death from becoming himself a regular attendant.

In this way commenced, in August, 1670, the "Collegia Pietatis," or "Devotional Classes," which soon became the objects of so much praise and so much bitter hatred, and which may be looked upon as the first distinct commencement of the great Pietistic movement, the seed of a new and active religious life in Germany, but at the same time the cause of renewed dissensions. At first the members of the classes were few in number, and almost exclusively men of some considerable position and culture; but before long people of every rank and age were to be found among them—men and women, learned and ignorant, theological students, lawyers, medical men, shopkeepers, working men of every grade. They met on Mondays and Wednesdays, the women so completely separated from the men that they could not even be seen. On each occasion Spener himself opened the meeting with prayer; he then read a portion of some devotional book, such as his old favourite, Bailey's *Practice of Piety*, or Lutkemann's



*Foretaste of Divine Love*, and a conversation followed, not upon any settled plan, but as the practical bearing of the subject itself might suggest. Speaking was confined to a few men of culture and education; the greater number of those present, and the whole of the women, were silent listeners. All subjects of controversy were rigidly excluded, "lest the Cross of Christ should be made of none effect, and their faith should stand in the wisdom of men, and not in the power of God"; and the object steadily kept in view was the practical application of acknowledged truth to the building up of the Christian character, and the furtherance of a living piety.

After these meetings had continued for five years a slight change was made in their arrangement. Instead of books of devotion, the New Testament became the basis of their conversation, and every Monday, after the prayer, Spener repeated his sermon of the day before, explaining its subject still further and enforcing its practical precepts, and the remaining time that day, and the whole of Wednesday, were devoted to the reading of the Bible. Before he left Frankfort they had in this way gone through three of the Gospels, and begun the first Epistle of St. John, read-

ing verse by verse, and leaving no sentence untouched. The two points upon which he most constantly insisted were the indispensable necessity of a living faith working by love, and the possibility of a genuine holy life even here upon earth, a life such as that to which St. John alludes when he says, "He that is born of God doth not commit sin," and St. Paul in the words, "Sin shall not have dominion over you." He continually dwelt upon the contrast between the abiding peace and joy of the life which is hid with Christ in God, and the perpetual unrest and unsatisfied craving of the children of this world, but he carefully abstained from alluding to particular persons as examples of a worldly life, and every one present was earnestly warned to keep himself solely in his view, and to labour unceasingly to bring his own life into conformity with what he had found to be the will of God.

For several years Spener succeeded in maintaining the original character of these meetings and keeping them free from abuse, and he was allowed to see an abundant fruit of his labours. Any little gossip and false report soon came to an end of itself, and he had nearly all Frankfort on his side. It was when the practice began to be imitated in

other places, and after Spener's name began to be recognized as a living power in the Reformation of the Church, that the Devotional Classes became an object of reproach.

It has been necessary to describe these Devotional Classes somewhat in detail, both because they were the foundation of the Pietistic movement in Germany, and go far to explain its nature and meaning, and also because they were so like, and yet so unlike, the class meetings set on foot during the next century by Wesley in England. Spener's object, as we have seen, was to kindle and keep in flame the Divine life in the soul. The conversation was confined to a few persons of education; there was no scrutiny of the individual conscience, and what each person learned of the things of God was to be applied by himself, in the silence of his heart, to the practice of his life. Wesley's object was by no means the same—it was, as he said himself, that the members of the classes might confess their faults one to another, and pray one for another. *Every one in order* engaged to tell as freely, plainly, and concisely as he could the real state of his heart, with his several temptations and deliverances since the last meeting, and no one was admitted who did not promise to be

entirely open and practise no kind of reserve. The resemblance between the two is in the outward form; their nature and object were essentially different, and it is easy to see how much more open to abuse the second were than the first.

But much as Spener's mind was occupied with this new means of usefulness within his own domain, he was far from allowing it to absorb his whole attention. On the contrary, he looked upon these little companies of people as a starting-point from whence a new life might spread, and a better spirit animate the whole Christian community. He was intensely anxious to make known to others what he had found to be of so much benefit to himself, and while he despaired of any permanent good resulting from the efforts, however well meant, of princes and governments, he hoped much from the prayerful labours of Christian men, working in different places, but actuated by the same spirit. In 1675 he published a pamphlet in German with the Latin title, *Pia Desideria*, or "Pious Desires," and followed it up soon after by another edition entirely in Latin. This little work, small as it is, contains the substance of all that was peculiar in Spener's teaching

and work, and it became the text of all the most furious controversies which agitated German Christianity during that and the next generation.

The "Pious Desires" were six in number. They were of course aimed at the correction of the most serious evils of the time—the reckless party spirit of divines, the sluggish indifference of princes, the rudeness and ignorance of the common people. They were as follows. First: A more general acquaintance with Scripture, and, to this end, that preachers should not confine themselves to their weekly sermon on the Gospel of the day, but should mix freely with their people in such classes as had been tried at Frankfort and explain to them continuously the books of the Bible. Second: That laymen should be made to feel that there was no sharp distinction between themselves and the clergy, but that they themselves were a spiritual priesthood. Third: That the truth should be continually enforced upon men that the knowledge of God is a matter of the heart rather than of the head, and that a merely intellectual acquaintance with doctrine, without charity, is of no profit. Fourth: General prayer for the removal of schisms and parties in the Church, and for the strengthening of

brotherly love. Fifth : A complete reform of the mode of education of the clergy at schools and universities, and a more direct training of theological students for their future work. He would have such practical writings as those of Tauler, Thomas à Kempis, and the *Theologia Germanica* put into their hands, that they might not forget the relation between their intellectual studies and their daily Christian life. Sixth : That there should be a change in the established mode of preaching, and that sermons should be aimed directly at the edification of the hearer, not at the mere polemical enforcement of disputed doctrines, or at the exhibition of the learning of the preacher.

Such is the substance of Spener's *Pia Desideria*. Nearly the whole of it is to us, in theory at least, a matter of course. Though our practice in any particular point may not be universal, the statement of the general desirability is almost a truism ; and the publication of such a pamphlet among ourselves would scarcely excite more than a passing remark. But Spener was astonished himself at the eagerness with which his book was read, and the sensation to which it gave rise throughout the length and breadth of the land. Letters of approval and sympathy began to pour

upon him from statesmen and divines in all quarters; and though some might express a desire for some little modification of some of his suggestions, it was clear that on the whole he had but put into words what was already in the minds of all thinking men. And what was far better even than all this, tidings soon began to reach him of efforts made in various places to carry out his suggestions, and of the rich blessing which never failed to rest upon them.

These were halcyon days in Spener's life, an interval of peace and satisfaction such as he never afterwards enjoyed; for very soon commenced the strife of tongues which never ceased until his death. His heart was overflowing with thankfulness and joy at the apparent revival of Christian life, and with humble gratitude for having been himself made the means of such an awakening. "I give humble and hearty thanks to the Giver of all good gifts for the blessing which has so mightily rested upon my simple little work. There was nothing in it of human wisdom to make one hope that man would highly esteem it; but He has made it a voice to awaken some who were sleeping and to give strength and comfort to a few who mourned, and He has turned to me the hearts of many who

were longing for His blessing, that we may cheer one another in turn with faith and prayer."

But he was wary even in his zeal, and distrustful even in the consciousness of the strength which attended his efforts. He knew well that to reform the Church was a work beyond an Archangel's power, and his own experience had taught him that the victory over evil is always very slowly gained, and is often impeded by obstacles for a long time insuperable. He felt some alarm at the apparent zeal with which the suggestions of the *Pia Desideria* were put in practice in many places, and wrote earnestly urging caution and moderation. He saw no hope of permanently influencing whole communities at once; his desire was to create in as many places as possible a nucleus of life, a little leaven which might gradually leaven the whole lump. He urged therefore, first of all, the simple formation of Devotional Classes, accompanied by an effort to arouse the laity in general to a consciousness of the spiritual priesthood to which they had been called by God.

His own efforts at Frankfort were of the most varied kind. He had for some time added to the ordinary labours of a parish



priest, and of a Doctor in the University, a class of students in Theology, into whom he strove to infuse some portion of his own spirit for their future work. But he looked forward to no great result within his own lifetime, or from his own individual effort. "I know well," he wrote to a friend, "that the reformation which is needed can never be accomplished by one man, and moreover that I am not the chief, nor one of the chief, of those whom God has chosen to do His work. This is clear, for He has not given me the gifts which are necessary for the task." Throughout his life Spener was painfully conscious of his own weakness, but at the same time intensely convinced of the near presence of Divine strength. His character was one of those which seem specially to mark men out as agents of a Divine work. Shrinking back with an oppressive sense of his own inability to accomplish what he saw to be needed most, he yet achieved the most astonishing results by simply doing the work which lay before him day after day, and bravely taking the step marked out for him at the moment. We recognize in him constantly the spirit which prompted the words of Jeremiah, "Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak, for I am a child," and which could not

bring itself to believe that one so weak and childlike could be set "to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant."

But his gentle spirit was now to be sorely tried, and the strength of its endurance tested. Raindrops began to fall which portended a storm. The Scribes and Pharisees came at first to the baptism of John, but were afterwards his bitterest opponents; and many of those who applauded Spener at the beginning of his work turned fiercely against him when they found how much that work implied. Men may feel the grasp of God upon their hearts, and presently become all the more hardened to resist it. It could not be but that, even in Frankfort, opposition would become active, and much more would hostility be roused against him in other places where a movement had commenced, connected with his name, but not directed by his Christian prudence. The first drops of calumny were soon followed by a heavy shower of falsehood and slander. Throughout Germany stories were told of the shocking practices of the "Quakers" and "Labadists" of Frankfort, how they had wholly forsaken the community of the Church, and were trying to introduce a community of goods and community of

women, how they practised the most abominable orgies at their meetings, and made religion a cloak for every kind of iniquity and licentiousness. Spener felt himself compelled to speak in his own defence, and to print and publish a refutation of these charges and an exposure of their absurdity and falsehood.

Then followed a paper war which lasted for years, and in which Spener speedily ceased to take any conspicuous part, well content to leave such work to those who loved it. There was no want of combatants on either side, and head and heart would alike grow weary and sink if we attempted to follow the details of the strife, which happily there is no necessity to do. The saddest part of it was that however triumphantly and completely Spener might refute the falsehoods which were in circulation, yet some of them were certain to be in a measure believed. In so pitiless a pelting some damage was sure to be done.

A strong feeling of hostility began to exist against him even in Frankfort. Two of those who attended his meetings, a lady of some position in the place and a student in the University, were ordered to leave the city; and it was only after great difficulty, and in consequence of the united efforts of the whole body of ministers, that this arbitrary decree

was rescinded. At the same time a strict censorship of the press was established, so far as religious literature was concerned, and the publication of one of Spener's own books was for a time suspended.

Just then came distressing news from Strassburg. In that city, so dear to Spener's early recollections, Horbius, his brother-in-law, had been for some time labouring in his own spirit, and with almost equal success. But a fierce opposition was roused against him by a deacon of the name of Arnold, and people's minds were so poisoned against him that the choice was given him of resignation or dismissal. He left Strassburg and spent some time with Spener at Frankfort. But the arrival of a man suspected of heresy, and dismissed from his own office, was not likely to do much to strengthen Spener's position; while the strong measure which had been taken against him served to justify the most dismal forebodings of the fierceness of the battle which was still to be fought.

But a more terrible trial was to come first, and a mischief more deadly than any mere persecution from without. His work in Frankfort had continued long enough for the first novelty to have passed away, and the peculiar dangers which had beset it from the begin-

ning to have developed themselves and taken a distinct form. One of the first charges brought against him by his enemies was that he was fostering a spirit of schism and separation. And although, so far as he himself was concerned, there was no foundation whatever for the charge, yet no one with any knowledge of human nature could fail to see that this was actually the quarter from which his work would be most seriously endangered. The sense of a closer union and nearer fellowship between those who were meeting week after week for higher aims and nobler purposes than the common intercourse of men would in many cases be certain to degenerate into an indifference, if not a contempt, for the wider fellowship of the community at large. The bond which bound all professing Christians together would be looked upon as merely formal and external, while that which united in one the members of the Devotional Classes would be considered to be alone spiritual, true and abiding, and by-and-by the one would be snapped in order that the other might be more closely drawn; and this tendency would be increased ten-fold if persecution arose from without.

Spener's eyes had never been closed to this danger. It had been from the beginning a

subject of his constant anxiety and constant prayer, and over and over again he had warned his hearers against it. While he painted in the darkest colours the general corruption, and urged the formation of little bands of pious persons as the only means by which the healing of the general disease could be commenced, he was careful to teach, in the most earnest and decided manner, that no excuse whatever could justify separation. Proposals were many times made to him, which, though in themselves they seemed to tend to edification, he unhesitatingly rejected on account of this imminent peril. Some of his friends suggested to him that, in addition to the public celebration of the Lord's Supper, from which the unworthy could not be excluded, there should be afterwards a meeting in some private house, where the members of the classes might partake of the Communion by themselves. This would be to destroy at one blow the very meaning of the Supper. Spener pointed out the impossibility of his complying with such a request, and the very serious danger which such a course would involve; and he redoubled his warnings against the sin of separation and division, and his efforts to promote a spirit of unity and Christian love.

His entreaties prevailed with many, but it was impossible entirely to ward off the evil; and now at length the charge brought from without could no longer be denied. A schism actually took place; many of those who attended the classes withdrew from Church Communion, and began to celebrate the Lord's Supper by themselves, finding it, as they alleged, impossible any longer to hold communion with sinners. This was a bitter grief to Spener. He laboured by every means in his power to remove the scandal which such a proceeding caused, and to show that it was not a necessary result of the class system, upon which such an abundant blessing had rested. But the stumblingblock continued in men's minds, and it was so much the more difficult to remove, because, even while condemning the separatists, he could not but recognize the germ of good which existed among them, and he strenuously refused "to reject the kernel because of the corruption of the shell." The report now began to spread that he himself was so painfully conscious of the evil and corruption which the Devotional Classes had introduced, that he was frequently heard to lament with tears that he had ever taken any part in commencing them. The fact that he still continued to hold them

during the entire period of his residence in Frankfort was a sufficient contradiction to this report. At the same time his experience during the latter portion of that period may probably have been the cause of his not establishing them either in Dresden, or in Berlin, the scene of his later labours.

If Spener had been a conspicuous object of men's attention when he first took his position as chief of the College of Ministers at Frankfort, the eyes of the world were a hundredfold more turned upon him now, when he was known throughout Germany as the originator of a movement such as had had no precedent since the days of Luther. And he began to feel, in its full measure, the weight of labour and responsibility which such a position brings with it. Scarcely a question occupied men's minds in any part of the Lutheran Communion, which was not sooner or later referred to him, if not for settlement, at all events for counsel and guidance. And it was a time when such questions were unusually abundant, and the conflict of opinions, and the heat of controversy, were unusually great. Matters of the most varied kind, from the most inmost secrets of the spiritual life to the outermost hem of the garment of theological dogma, were re-



ferred to him, sometimes by sovereign princes, sometimes by councils of free cities, sometimes by colleges of divines, sometimes by bodies of laymen, and in every case his opinion carried with it a weight proportioned to his great reputation. The entire absence of anything like a common and generally recognized authority in religious questions produced in Germany a state nearly resembling anarchy, in which individual influence took the place, to a very great extent, of the voice of authority. And it is one of the most painful ironies of history, that the subject which has given rise to the bitterest hatred and the most fierce animosity has been the effort made at different times by Christian men, to produce a feeling of love and Christian fellowship between the adherents of differing communions.

For such efforts have often been made by those whose hearts longed for peace. Church history is full of them. An attempt of this kind had been made in the early part of the sixteenth century by George Calixtus of Helmstadt. He himself belonged to the Lutheran Communion, but Lutherans looked coldly upon him when they found that he acknowledged the existence of a bond of Christian fellowship with the Calvinists, or "Reformed," and even

considered that they were nearer to himself than the Church of Rome. The result of his efforts was the Synod of Thorn, in 1645, which was intended to unite Lutherans and Calvinists in one body, and in the profession of one faith. Its only effect, however, was the creation of a new party, the so-called Syncretists, who sympathized with the efforts of Calixtus, but were unable permanently to influence either of the two great Communion, and became themselves objects of suspicion to both. The syncretistic controversy continued to distract the religious world of Germany through the whole of the seventeenth century, and part of the eighteenth. It was difficult for any one to find his way in those perplexing times. How on the one hand was he to keep himself clear of party spirit, and questions which only gender strife, and on the other hand resist the temptation to sheer indifference, and neglect of the distinct truths of the Gospel?

Spener was a Lutheran to the backbone. He not only, in common with other Protestants of the time, looked upon the Roman Communion as the spiritual Babylon of the Revelation, but in early life he entirely shared the prejudices of other Lutherans against the "Reformed." Soon after his arrival in Frankfurt he preached a sermon, on the eighth

Sunday after Trinity, in which he inveighed against the Calvinists as false prophets, who came as wolves in sheep's clothing to ravage the Lutheran body. At the time he was not sorry for the reputation of staunch Lutheran orthodoxy, which this sermon gained for him. But the course of years modified his sentiments, and when the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, in October, 1685, scattered the French Protestants in crowds over Germany, and large numbers of them sought refuge in Frankfort from the fury of persecution, Spener recognized them, Calvinists though they were, as martyrs in the common cause of Protestantism, and gave them a hearty welcome. And on his deathbed he expressed in bitter terms his repentance for the want of charity of his early years.

As time went on, indeed, Spener gave great offence, not merely by his sympathy with Calvinists, but by the freedom with which he handled the great name of Luther himself. He ventured more than once to point out that Luther was after all only a man, and might have made a mistake in some matter of detail. Strange and incredible as it may seem, such a statement as this was in those days looked upon as little short of heresy; and even when Spener quoted the famous similitude of the

dwarf on the giant's shoulder, he could not persuade any one to believe it possible that he could be right and Luther wrong, whatever might be the matter in hand. When he heard men, in the narrowness of their bigotry, "shooting out arrows, even bitter words," at those who belonged to a different confession from their own, he was in the habit of saying that "the Lord Jesus must be but a poor King if all His subjects are included in the narrow limits of the Lutheran Communion. He Himself claimed the heathen for His inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for His possession, and promised to know and recognize His own, however they might be scattered in the midst of this naughty world."

He had a profound faith in the power of the Gospel to overcome the world, and by no means confined his loving interest within the limits of the Christian Church, even in the widest sense of the words. The character of the man appears in an effort which he made, soon after he came to Frankfort, to persuade the Government to undertake the conversion of the Jews, large numbers of whom had settled in the town. He was for having these unfortunate people compelled to assemble, three or four times a year, to listen to a sermon upon the evidences of Christianity, with par-

ticular reference to themselves. Nor was he by any means the first person who had advocated such a course. Fortunately, in this case, the four Scholarchs were wiser than he, and declined to interfere with the freedom of worship which had been guaranteed to the Jews, and on second thoughts he himself perceived that the means which he proposed were the very least likely to accomplish the end which he so much desired. These second thoughts became the abiding temper of his mind. He gave up the hope of bringing the Jews by violent means within the fold of Christ, and exerted himself to rouse the sympathies of his fellow-Christians for them, and to remove the cruel prejudices which still existed against them, a mournful legacy from the Middle Ages. In fact, throughout his life, he was a rare instance of the manner in which the narrowing influence of an atmosphere of controversy may be resisted and overcome. He was forced against his will into perpetual strife and contention; but as years passed over his head, he was actuated less and less by a sectarian spirit; his heart became larger, his sympathies wider.

### CHAPTER III.

Spener Court Preacher at Dresden.—Church affairs in Saxony.—John Benedict Carpzov.—The Universities of Wittenberg and Leipsic.—Spener's book upon the Hindrances to the Study of Theology.—The name "Pietist."—August Hermann Francke.—Bible Classes at Leipsic.—Storm of Calumny.—Thomasius.—Spener offends the Elector of Saxony.—Removes to Berlin.

AFTER twenty years of labour at Frankfort, Spener received an invitation to occupy a post which offered a wider sphere of usefulness, but in which, at the same time, he was certain to be plunged into fiercer contests than ever.

Lucius, Court Preacher and Confessor to the Elector of Saxony, was dangerously ill; and the Elector, who had some time before been much struck by a sermon of Spener's, which he chanced to hear when passing through Frankfort, commissioned the famous Baron von Seckendorf, his own privy councillor and a friend of Spener's, to offer to the latter the post when it should become vacant. It was looked upon as the highest ecclesiastical preferment in the whole Lutheran Communion, for men naturally entertained a special regard for the country which had been the cradle of the Reformation, and looked with hope and

confidence to the Elector of Saxony as the most distinguished and the most powerful of Protestant princes. Whoever occupied the post which was soon to be vacant would be expected to exercise great influence over Church matters in one of the chief provinces of Germany, and would be in constant communication with the most renowned and most learned theologians of the time.

Spener, as usual, shrank from the novelty and responsibility of such a position. He had always thought that his peculiar gifts were of an exactly opposite kind, the power of popular speaking, and of influencing large and mixed congregations by pulpit discourses, and of catechetical instruction of the young. At Dresden there would be little opportunity of work of such a kind. In his first answer he replied that he could take to himself the words of Jeremiah, "If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and if in the land of peace they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?" "I cannot bring myself to believe that the Lord, to whom my weakness is thoroughly known, can have marked me out for a post, for which He has not equipped me with the necessary powers."

All action in the matter was for a long time suspended, partly in consequence of this reply, but still more by a severe illness, which laid Spener low for seven months, during a large part of which his life was in the utmost danger. Soon after his recovery Lucius died, and a formal offer of the post came from Dresden, with a request from the Elector that he would accept it.

He was immediately plunged into the same indecision which we saw marking his character when the summons came to leave Strassburg for Frankfort twenty years before. He had not the courage to decide for himself whether the offer was to be accepted or refused. First he laid the question before the Council of Magistrates of Frankfort, undertaking to abide by their decision. But they declined to give an opinion, thinking rightly enough that the responsibility was one which could not be shifted from himself to other persons. He then proposed the question separately to five divines, residing in different places, giving reasons on both sides, and asking each of them for his judgement in the matter. Every one of them separately returned the same answer, that the call was from God, and that he would be doing wrong if he refused to follow it. And he accepted



their agreement as an undoubted indication of the Divine will, and all hesitation from that moment ceased.

When, however, he wrote to the Elector of Saxony accepting the appointment, it was only on the distinct understanding that no Court hindrances were to be allowed to interfere with his preaching the Word of God freely and fully according to his ability, and that the Government was to support him to the utmost of its power. In June, 1686, he preached his farewell sermon, solemnly commending to God the city and the people where he had laboured so long, and borne so much, and which had become through him a centre of light for the rest of Protestant Germany.

He seems to have started upon his journey to Dresden with a mind almost feverishly excited, and a nervous system strained by long indecision and doubt, and by anxiety for the future. His way seemed to him to be marked by signs and wonders, and every incident, however slight and unimportant, was weighted with a deep and mysterious meaning, and supposed to bring a direct and special message to him from God. Before he set out, he was "not a little moved" by his eldest daughter showing him the verses upon which her finger happened to rest when she opened the New

Testament in the evening. They were verses 3 and 10 of Acts vii, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee." "God was with him, and delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt."

While he was on his journey, at the moment when he entered the Saxon territory, it happened that some choristers, coming out of school, went up to the carriage and chanted the words of the German metrical version of Psalm xii. 5, "Now for the comfortless troubles' sake of the needy, and because of the deep sighing of the poor, I will up, saith the Lord, and will help every one from him that swell-eth against him, and will set him at rest." The words brought back to his memory an evening at Frankfort, when he had been mourning over the apparently desperate state of things around him, and had gone into church with a heavy heart for the evening service, and heard the choir at his entrance sing these same words. They had cheered and encouraged him then, and he took them now for a sign from heaven. They made such an impression upon him that, during the five years of his residence at Dresden, he made

the chorister boys habitually sing them in front of his house.

During the same journey he entered into conversation with a person of rank, who told him that he, and the difficult post which he was going to occupy, had been much in his thoughts and prayers that morning, and that when his prayer was over he had opened the Bible to look for a message of strength for him, and his eye was immediately caught by the words of Zechariah iv. 7—"Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain. And he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it." Spener did not venture to look upon these words as a prophecy of himself, but he looked upon the incident as directly ordered for his encouragement, believing that nothing happens by chance, but that all things are under the direction of an all-wise Father, and that even the most trifling incidents of daily life should be looked upon as coming from the hand of God, and bringing a message from the unseen.

Every incident of his journey seemed to point the same way, and to tend to diminish his anxiety and encourage him to confidence and hope, and it was with a cheerful heart that he at last reached his destination. His

formal assumption of office immediately followed, and he preached his first sermon in the chapel attached to the Electoral palace, on the Gospel of the day, the sixth Sunday after Trinity. By a curious coincidence the subject was the same as that of the sermon which, seventeen years before, had given rise at Frankfort to the Devotional Classes, and the religious movement which had since become so general.

On the present occasion his sermon commenced with a solemn Christian greeting to the Elector and every individual member of his family, to the officers of State, to his new colleagues in the Christian ministry, to the city of Dresden, and the whole of Saxony. Then, turning more directly to his text, he warned his hearers earnestly and fervently against the selfrighteousness of the Pharisees, and exhorted them to a living faith in the living God. Afterwards, with particular reference to himself, he explained what he considered to be the functions of the Christian ministry, and stated plainly the treatment which he had a right to expect from his hearers as a Minister of Christ, and Steward of the mysteries of God.

His style of preaching was precisely the same as before, plain in language, simple in

conception, direct in application. And in Dresden, as before in Frankfort, he immediately began to rouse attention, and to gain personal influence. The Elector himself in private candidly confessed that he had never supposed it possible for him to be so moved by a sermon.

Spener thankfully recognized in all this a sign that the blessing of God was resting upon his work; but signs of another kind speedily made themselves visible, showing that his activity would meet with desperate resistance. In a country like Saxony it could not be otherwise. The spirit which had been so mightily stirred by the preaching of Luther, and had received with so much joy the heavenly message that man may put his trust in God, and lose himself to find himself in Him, and that whoever so trusts in God, and yields himself to Him, becomes thereby partaker of the righteousness of Him whose servant he has become;—that spirit, of which Luther had said that by its living power a Church must stand, or by the loss of it must fall, had been buried in the formal doctrine of Justification by Faith, and a rigid dogma of the intellect, wearing the semblance of the faith of the heart, was passing current as the truth and the life. The faith of Luther had stiffened.

into Lutheranism and died. And Lutheranism of the straitest kind was dominant in Saxony, and showed itself there in its most repulsive and most inflexible shape.

To orthodoxy such as this Spener must have seemed one of the most dangerous of heretics. And even if this had been otherwise, the atmosphere of a court was not one in which a man of his earnestness, his freedom of speech, his Christian zeal, could freely breathe for any length of time; and, great as were the prudence and caution with which he entered upon his task, it was clear from the beginning that the jealousy of the clergy of Dresden would cause him many a bitter hour. Do what he would, the time would never come when they would be induced to give him any help or sympathy in his work.

He had not been long in Dresden before a formal complaint was made against him by the clergy of one of the churches, that he had seemed, in one of his sermons, to throw a slight upon the manner in which the doctrine of justification had hitherto been preached in the place. "I see before me, and around me," said Spener about this time, "a mighty power, and a firmly established kingdom of Satan, and difficulties which no human help or confidence will avail to overcome. To oppose to

all this I have nothing but the power of God. But against this nothing can stand. It was at His call that I came here, and He is faithful and true. My work, poor as it is, is done at His command; and He will not allow it to remain entirely without His blessing and without result. On this I take my stand, and hope against hope, patiently waiting for the blessing which the Lord will give in His time. In this confidence of faith I trust that my heavenly Father will sustain me. His will must in all things work itself out."

Very soon it began to be said that the Elector had been looking for a court preacher, and had by mistake got for himself a school-master instead. But at first smiles were upon every face. From the two great centres of orthodoxy in Saxony, the Universities of Wittenberg and Leipsic, Spener received a welcome in the warmest terms of congratulation. This welcome, even at the time when it was given, was but partially sincere, and the bitter enmity of some persons speedily threw off the mask of friendship. Conspicuous among these was John Benedict Carpzov, Professor at Leipsic, who had himself aspired to the post now occupied by Spener. Spener had studied with this man at Strassburg, and had carried on a friendly correspondence with

him during his residence at Frankfort, but had been warned against him as a certain enemy at Dresden. Carpzov belonged to one of the most distinguished families of the seventeenth century, in point of learning and of Lutheran orthodoxy. One of his kinsmen was a judge of criminals and heretics, and used to boast that he had read through the Bible fifty-three times, and that he had passed twenty thousand sentences of death. The Leipsic Professor, whose acquaintance we are now making, was himself a man of great learning, and his services to the Church, particularly in the matter of education, were beyond all question.

His opposition, with that of other conspicuous members of the two Universities, was the more distressing to Spener, and the greater hindrance in his way, because the reform of the Universities had not only been for a long time among his most earnest desires, but had become, in his new position at Dresden, one of the duties of his office. A collision was therefore inevitable. "My most earnest endeavour," said Spener at this time, "so far as any advice or example of mine can contribute to such a result, is to bring back the clergy by degrees to the simplicity and holiness of life which belongs to their office, for upon this without doubt their power of doing service to the



Church most chiefly depends; and, in the next place, to bring back the students in the Universities to the study of the Scriptures and to the practice of piety, so that they may neither waste their time in pursuits which can never be a help to them in their holy calling, nor entangle themselves in scholastic pettiness and splitting of straws; nor yet pass their days in forgetfulness of God, and so make themselves unfit for that preparatory work of the Holy Spirit, which alone can form the true theologian. As for other means of doing good, I shall wait and see what door God opens before me, and carefully follow every sign which He vouchsafes to give me for my guidance."

The first door which Spener found opened before him was one of a kind which, as we know, he was not in the habit of neglecting. After he had been in Dresden a few months, he obtained the Elector's consent to his establishing classes for catechizing, first in his own house, then, as numbers began steadily to increase, in the private chapel of the Electress. He took this step on his own authority, knowing well that the assent of his colleagues in the Ministry, even if asked, would never be obtained, and thinking it more conducive to peace to do in silence what he saw to be right,

than to provoke open opposition by asking for a consent which was certain to be refused.

But he found himself completely isolated. The other clergy of Dresden resented the slight which they considered had been put upon them by the chief pastor, in taking such a step without asking their advice, and throughout the country the clergy complained that the catechizing of the young was a schoolmaster's work, beneath their own dignity, and, in the form in which it was introduced by Spener, a useless innovation. Among the laity of Dresden, however, very high value was set upon the new mode of instruction. Grown up people of both sexes became regular attendants at Spener's catechizing, and public opinion supported him when he used his great influence with the Government to obtain a law enforcing regular catechizing by the clergy, throughout the territory of Electoral Saxony. It was not easy to carry such a law into effect, when all were unwilling and some were incapable, but lapse of time accomplished much, and when long years had passed, after Spener's departure from Dresden, it was found that the universal custom of catechizing, in every parish on Sunday afternoons, was a legacy of priceless value which he had left behind him.

But however great might be the blessing which resulted from his catechizing, his sermons continued to be the chief means by which he directly influenced those who were placed under his immediate spiritual charge. His sense of the importance of preaching deepened more and more, as years passed over his head. He devoted more and more attention to the preparation of his own sermons, and he laboured more and more incessantly to persuade the clergy, of whom he was the chief, to address their people with a view to the rousing of the spiritual life, rather than to the mere assertion of orthodox doctrine, or the utterance of an artistic composition. But no amount of preparation, nor even the influence of constant habit, could ever, up to the very end of his life, take from him the sense of solemn awe in ascending the pulpit to deliver the message of God, or the nervous dread arising from addressing a large congregation with no written words on paper to help his memory. He often quoted to young men what had been said to himself in his youth, that that sense of solemn awe is a precious thing, which one should be careful not to lose, and that the nervous dread which arises from causes more of this world is still, or may be made, a

blessing, bringing with it the consciousness of weakness which enables a man habitually to depend upon God, and the humility which may make it impossible to be puffed up.

In private conversations and public addresses, in books and charges and pamphlets, he was incessantly labouring to raise the tone of feeling among the clergy, and to elevate their aims and purposes. But all that he could accomplish in this direction would be of little use, unless he could powerfully influence the Universities, those centres of learning where the future preachers of the Gospel were sent to be trained for their sacred office. In the examination of candidates for the Ministry, he observed with distress how destitute the greater number of them were of any real knowledge of the Scriptures, or of the practical bearing of the Gospel, while they could talk familiarly enough of the technicalities of Scholastic Theology, and systems of Metaphysical Philosophy. To correct this was a gigantic task, and he well knew that any effort to accomplish it would be met by the fiercest opposition; but his office as ecclesiastical chief gave him both the right and the occasion to interfere.

Very soon after his arrival he obtained a decree from the Electoral Government, enjoin-

ing upon the Professors in both Universities to give to Biblical Criticism and Exegesis the highest place in the theological course, and to make this the chief subject of their lectures to students. A much more important step, however, was taken in 1690, when he published his work, "*De impedimentis studii theologici,*" *On the causes which hinder the study of Theology.* In this he explained at some length his view of the manner in which theological studies ought to be pursued, and candidates prepared for the Ministry. It was to a certain extent an expression of what he had already briefly written upon the same subject in the *Pia Desideria*, fifteen years before. He repeated, in stronger terms than ever, that the future divine must, from the very cradle, be separated from the world, and brought up with a view to his future work alone: any admixture of other objects would, he said, only bring misery in this world and in the next. Many who in another calling might have saved their souls, or at all events have found greater mercy at the Judgement, have, through their misuse of the holiest things, heaped up for themselves a severer condemnation. For if a man bring strange fire into the sanctuary of God, he must needs be destroyed by the avenging flame; though,

if he had never entered the holy place, he might have saved his soul alive. Every man therefore who thinks of consecrating himself to the work of the Ministry must, above and before all things, examine himself thoroughly, and consider whether he is resolved to die daily to the outward life, so that the world is crucified to him, and he to the world, and he no longer has an eye to what the world counts precious, but is ready to bear the world's hatred and scorn, and all contradictions which arise therefrom, looking upon these as the inseparable accompaniments of any hearty endeavour to serve the Holy One, and counting well the cost, and arming himself beforehand, that he may not lose courage when the fierceness of the battle begins.

Upon such a foundation as this the study of Theology was in every individual case to be commenced, and without this foundation the superstructure would be worse than useless, certain only to fall, and bury all spiritual life beneath its ruins. This foundation having been laid, Spener goes on to describe the studies which he looked upon as preparatory handmaids to Theology itself. These were Philosophy, Philology, and History. Upon the last two in particular he laid great stress. Still it must be confessed

that his deep sense of the evils which at that period were choking and strangling Christian life in Protestant Germany, evils which resulted from a stiff doctrinal system and a lifeless orthodoxy, led him to attach too slight an importance to the intellectual side of the study of Theology, and to expect too much from mere piety, earnestness, and devotion. This tendency is natural to a mind of noble aims and lofty purposes, impatient of the shell in its eagerness to grasp the kernel, but none the less is it a perilous mistake to yield to it.

With this same object in view, to counteract the too intellectual tendencies of professed theologians, he was most anxious to obtain the admission of the laity to a share in the decision of Church questions. He thought that they might bring the freshness of the human heart, and the practical experience of the spiritual life, to bear upon matters which, in the hands of professed divines, would be hopelessly entangled in the details of technical Theology. But this he never, to the last, succeeded in accomplishing. He invariably found the Electoral Government immoveable, and even the least concession was steadily refused.

We should form a very incomplete concep-

tion of Spener's labours at this period, if we were not to take into account that, besides the multifarious direct and indirect cares which his office brought upon him in its ordinary course, he was also looked upon and treated as guide and counsellor of all Protestant Germany in theological matters. His correspondence extended through the length and breadth of the Fatherland, and he was incessantly called upon, both publicly and privately, for formal "memorials" upon the most important and most difficult Church questions of the day. While he was still at Frankfort, he found it necessary to petition the Government to exempt his letters from the payment of postage, and, on his arrival at Dresden, he asked and obtained the same exemption from the Government of Saxony. At the end of one year he assured a friend that, since its commencement, he had received and answered six hundred and twenty-two letters, and that three hundred remained to be answered still. The Bishop of an English Diocese, in these days of the penny post, would no doubt smile at the suggestion that this number is large, and would be glad to think that his own letters were so few; but we must remember that none of these were upon short questions of business, to be an-



swered in a sentence, but they required long and careful consideration and often a voluminous reply.

It was during the five years of Spener's residence at Dresden, that the word "Pietist" first began to be used as the title of a religious party. This was a direct consequence of Spener's own life and labours. The diversity, which existed between the whole character of his teaching and the dominant character of his time, simplicity in contrast with pedantry, moderate freedom of thought in contrast with the perpetual suspicion of heresy, strictness in the inward life in contrast with a trust in outward ceremonial, life and freshness in the mode of handling and judging of Christian things and questions, in contrast with a mere traditional Christianity; all this could not but lead to a state of tension and often of alienation, which sooner or later was certain to show itself in actual strife.

When this happened the word Pietist became a party name. The name in some respects resembles our own term "Methodist." It was used as a word of reproach, and it was used as a word of appreciation. It was a nickname applied in contempt by some to those whom they despised, and it was a name deliberately adopted for themselves by others

who gloried in it. It was a name applied with a definite meaning to persons of a distinct mode of thought and feeling, and it was a name loosely and indefinitely applied to persons of the most varied character and opinions, who differed from one another more widely than any of them differed from those who used the word. Any one who lived a quiet and thoughtful life, who had little taste for the pleasures of the world, who was not seen at dances, at theatres, and places of amusement, who occupied himself with religious subjects, and sometimes attended religious meetings, was pretty sure to be called a Pietist. But, as the name of a religious party, the use of the word is closely intertwined with the history of Spener. While he was still at Frankfort, people called those who attended his classes Pietists, meaning that they seemed to wish to be more pious than other people, or to be righteous overmuch, and to allow the pursuit of learning and science to be crowded out of their minds, even in a seat of learning, by the desire to be religious. Knowing what we do of Spener's character, and of the nature of the efforts he was making to bring back Christian life, we cannot wonder that his enemies fixed upon this particular word as a term of reproach. Prac-

tical piety was the very element in which his theological teaching existed: it was the end at which he aimed; it was by it that he hoped, if he hoped at all, to accomplish the reformation of the Lutheran Communion. And such words as Pietist, applied first to individuals, sometimes in sport, sometimes in ill-nature, have always a tendency to become fixed and stereotyped as the names of parties. So it was in this case.

About the time that Spener came into office at Dresden, there were in the University at Leipsic two private lecturers in Theology, August Hermann Francke, and Paul Anton, who were already working in Spener's spirit, and had begun to read the Scriptures in some of their classes. They were afterwards joined by a third, John Caspar Schade; and when they found an increasing number of the students ready to accept their invitation, they began to hold regular classes on Sundays, as soon as the afternoon sermon was over. These classes began and ended with prayer, and in the interval they devoted an hour to the reading and discussion of a chapter in the Old Testament, and another to one in the New, reading in both cases the original languages. It would have been difficult to find anything to blame in all this, and at first

they met with nothing but praise. Numbers continued to increase, so that a private room was no longer large enough for their meetings, but Alberti, one of the Professors, allowed them the use of his lecture room, and himself took the lead in the meetings which were held there. They were now formally recognized by the University as "Bible Classes" (*Collegia Philobiblica*), and Spener, who was now at Dresden, and could not long continue a stranger to the movement, wrote a letter expressing his satisfaction in strong terms, and next year he was himself present at one of their meetings. The love of novelty in some, combined with genuine earnestness of purpose in others, and the unwearied efforts of Francke, produced the effects which might have been expected. The classes became larger and larger in number, and increased in strength every day. Other lecture rooms were empty on the Wednesday afternoons on which their meetings were now held. And by degrees the change which had taken place in their thoughts and feelings began to change the character of their outward life. They gave up the boisterous rudeness of ordinary students, and became quiet and collected in their demeanour, and even in their costume they showed visibly the new love of simplicity, laying aside the

customary wig and embroidered neckcloth, and going about in modest and unpretending dress. But some were not content with this, and went so far as to burn the notes which they had before taken at the lectures of the ordinary Professors, and to give away their books as useless lumber, resolving to confine themselves in future to the Bible alone, with a few works of a devotional character.

These excesses, in which false and mistaken zeal was no doubt, in many cases, mixed with mere vanity and affectation, put a weapon into the hands of Spener's enemies, which they were not slow to use. The most conspicuous of these, among the Theological Professors at Leipsic, was the same John Benedict Carpzov, who has been already mentioned. He had, indeed, himself at first taken a distinct part in the movement which originated the Bible Classes, and in a sermon preached before the University he had expressed his astonishment that, while they had classes for nearly every other purpose, they had none for the study of the Bible. But poor human nature is only too ready to shut its eyes to the beauty of even its own favourite ideas, when they are carried out by others on a somewhat different plan. And this, or a hostile feeling already aroused toward Spener,

may have been the secret cause of Carpzov's enmity. At all events he soon took an opportunity of using language very different from that which he had used before. It fell to his lot to preach the sermon at the funeral of a person who had been in the habit of attending Francke's Bible Classes; and with more than doubtful taste, and grievous want of charity, he seized the occasion to attack the Bible Classes themselves, saying of them many things which he must have known to be untrue, and adding that the students who attended them might perhaps become pretty pious, but were certain to remain pretty ignorant.

The sensation which in any case would have been caused by such a sermon from the lips of such a preacher was increased to a very great degree by the fact that Joachim Feller, Professor of Poetry at Leipsic, had selected the same occasion for composing a funeral poem, the very first words of which claimed the name of Pietist as a title, not of reproach, but of honour, and described the Pietist as one who made the word of God his study, and led a holy life in accordance with its precepts. The sermon, and copies of the ode, were immediately sent to Dresden, and the news began to spread that a new sect, of persons called Pietists, had made its appear-

ance at Leipsic. This was the first use, of the name, as distinctively marking a party in the Church. It very soon came into general use, and the controversy which first agitated Saxony, but speedily extended itself through the whole of Protestant Germany, received from it the name of *Pietistic*.

The use of a distinct name, though in itself perhaps a small matter, often becomes from circumstances a matter of great importance. A vast multitude of false, malicious, and absurd reports began to fly from mouth to mouth on the subject of the new sect, its peculiarities of opinion, and the eccentricities of its members. And all the hazy multitude of vague impressions left by these reports were suggested to the mind when the name Pietist was heard. The word served as a convenient missile, containing in itself all sorts of explosive substances combined together. To call a man a Pietist was to call him by a name which perhaps might really apply to him, but which suggested in addition all sorts of mysterious and unknown heresies and sins. Carpzov allowed no opportunity to escape him of pouring upon the Pietists the vials of his scorn and contempt. Weak men were terrified by the violence of the tempest. Even the few University Professors, who at first

had favoured the movement, dared not allow their names to be mixed up with that of a sect which pedantry had associated in men's minds with ignorance. Even Alberti, who at first had allowed the use of his Lecture Room to Francke and his friends, and had himself conducted some of their meetings, now joined Carpzov in its bitterest assault, fearing that his favourite study of Philosophy, of which he was Professor, might otherwise be brought into contempt. One great name, that of the Jurist Thomasius, appeared on the opposite side. He had already shown his independence and strength of mind by his courageous assaults upon the popular notions of witchcraft, with their attendant injustice and cruelty, and he now, with equal bravery, became the advocate of Spener and the Pietists.

The great object of Carpzov and his allies was to convict the Pietists of heresy, because they would, in that case, be excluded from the benefits of the peace of Westphalia. This treaty, at the close of the Thirty Years' War, had secured toleration to the members of the three great Confessions only, viz. the Roman, the Lutheran, and the Reformed. Horbius, Spener's brother-in-law, who, as we have before seen, had already suffered persecution at Strassburg for such work as Spener's, was



now a victim to similar machinations at Hamburg, where he had been labouring for the last few years. And the danger was becoming imminent that, in the present excited state of men's minds, Carpzov and his remorseless crew might attain their object, and the Pietists might be pronounced a sect of heretics, unacknowledged by the State, unrecognized by the law, and outside the pale of toleration.

In the midst of all this turmoil and trouble, Spener had a new and nearer cause of anxiety in the strained relation which began to exist between himself and the Elector of Saxony, and which rendered the continuance of his residence at Dresden extremely doubtful. He had all along been remarkable, as we have seen, for his Christian prudence, gentleness, and charity, which had enabled him, in one difficult position after another, to follow peace with all men, and to win respect and esteem where many other persons would have been distrusted and disliked. He was equally remarkable, however, for an unswerving courage, which gave strength and firmness to a disposition which was naturally timorous and retiring; and in the performance of the duties of his office, no fear of man, or any respect of persons made him shrink from speaking the truth plainly, when he considered

himself called upon to do so, even to the powerful of the earth, and to princes who were his own patrons. He had taken office as Court preacher at Dresden on the express condition that he was to be allowed to preach the word of God fully and freely, according to his conscience, without let or hindrance from the Government, and, in spite of the efforts of many persons, he had been left unmolested in the exercise of his functions. But, besides holding the office of Court preacher, he was also the private confessor of the Elector; and in this capacity he felt himself compelled to make some remonstrance with reference to the mode of life of the latter.

He took occasion of a fast day in February, 1689, to put his thoughts upon paper in a few words of modest but very earnest exhortation, and handed the paper to the Elector. It was well received, and the Elector was at first much touched by his words; but the courtiers who surrounded him the next day, flatterers of himself, and no friends of Spener, persuaded him that the spirited remonstrance of the Court preacher showed a want of respect to the Electoral dignity, and would, if passed over, lead to further liberties. From that day forward the goodwill which had hitherto existed between Spener and his patron was

succeeded by coldness and restraint. The paper was at once returned, accompanied by a very wordy reply, in which no harsh terms were indeed applied to Spener himself, but various other persons were severely condemned for the part which they were supposed to have taken in the matter. Spener, who had written the paper entirely of his own motion, could not avoid answering these charges and explaining that no one besides himself had been even aware of the step which he was taking. This second communication was returned to him unopened. After this the Elector never again gave him audience, never attended his preaching, and never received the Communion at his hands, and Spener began to expect an immediate dismissal.

In this way a whole year passed by in total estrangement, but without any overt words of offence on either side. In the course of the year the office of Provost of St. Nicolas' Church at Berlin became vacant, and the question was put unofficially to Spener whether or not he would accept it. He replied in the negative, but a few months afterwards the offer was formally repeated in official language by the Elector of Brandenburg. Most persons would have been inclined to see in this a providential deliverance from

a position which had become not only unpleasant and difficult but much less apparently useful than heretofore. Not so Spener. He replied that he was ready to go wherever God might send him, provided only that he was first assured that the summons was from heaven. At present he stood in doubt. But if, without any expression of opinion or desire on his own part, the Governments of Brandenburg and Saxony were to concur in proposing his removal from Dresden to Berlin, he should consider that the summons was from God, and must be obeyed. The Elector of Brandenburg, not knowing what the Saxon Government might say to this, was in no haste to take the initiative, and the subject dropped for a time.

It was now the winter of 1690, and the Elector of Saxony, returning from one of his numerous campaigns against the French, bitterly complained that he could not live in his own palace at Dresden because of the chief Court preacher, and he made an effort to induce Spener to resign by the offer of a pension for life. But Spener replied that God had placed him where he was, and he was not at liberty to go elsewhere of his own will. The Electress, who was ardently attached to Spener, endeavoured to mediate between him and her husband, and her efforts

were supported by the members of the Privy Council. But all was vain. The Elector was bent upon ridding himself of Spener; and Spener was willing enough to go if the path of duty could only be made clear. But how was this to be? The case seemed to be desperate. Spener was, as usual in such emergencies, asking for a sign from heaven, but in this case the sign delayed to come.

At last a hint was sent from Dresden to Berlin that the Government of Brandenburg should make a formal request to the Elector of Saxony to release Spener from his office. This was done, and the request was immediately granted. The Elector announced to him his dismissal in an autograph letter, in which he offered to pay his travelling expenses, and to continue to his wife the pension already promised to himself. Two days after this came once more the offer of the appointment at Berlin, which was this time accepted without hesitation. He wrote a farewell letter to the Elector, touching delicately upon the differences which had arisen between them, and assuring him that he had been throughout actuated by the feelings which became a pastor and a subject. Then followed a mournful parting with the Electress and her two sons, and in June, 1691, he set out for his new home.

## CHAPTER IV.

The Electors of Brandenburg and their course in Church matters.—Foundation of the University of Halle.—Breithaupt, Anton, and Francke as Professors.—Violence of Carpzov and his party.—Mysticism.—False prophets and fanatics. Spener's calmness and moderation.—The Confessional.—Tumults caused by Schade.—What is "the World"?—Spener's private life.—His last illness and death.

SPENER had now gradually traversed Germany from South to North, and entered upon the fourth scene of his labours in the Church of Christ. In income and in worldly position his appointment at Berlin was far inferior to that which he had left at Dresden. But worldly advantage was never any great object in his eyes, and in all other respects the change was very much for the better. His opportunities of good were greater, and the sphere of his immediate influence was far wider than it had been in the little circle of the Court at Dresden. He was, as before, a member of the Consistorial Court, and he had now the inspection of a Diocese intrusted to him. Now, too, he had begun to feel in his own experience the truth of which he had

often before expressed himself convinced, that the Church is never so well off as when the civil government of the country is in the hands of those who belong to another confession. For the princes of the house of Brandenburg belonged to the Reformed Communion. It was three years since the death of the Great Elector, Frederick William, during whose long reign the power of the family had steadily increased, and the Electoral throne was now occupied by his son Frederick, who ten years afterwards assumed the royal title, and became the first King of Prussia. He carried out the wise and prudent policy of the Great Elector in church matters. Belonging himself to the Reformed Confession, he was careful to keep the scales of justice evenly balanced between the two rival communions, and the religious peace which existed in the territory of Brandenburg was an object of envy in the other parts of Germany. The Lutherans were not exposed to the slightest oppression or persecution. They enjoyed entire freedom of religious worship, and they were even allowed to argue in the pulpit against the doctrines of Calvinism, one only condition being strictly insisted upon, that no abusive or needlessly offensive language should be used in public.

This spirit of mildness and moderation, which actuated the Government, was quite in accordance with the gentleness and charity towards others which had always characterized Spener, even in the midst of his own fervent zeal, and which indeed had been the chief cause of the Elector's great desire to bring him to Berlin; and the respect and affection with which he was at first received, continued to increase as years passed by, and lasted undiminished long after his death. He felt himself thoroughly in his element from the first, and very soon he was at his old work of preaching and catechizing the young, and preparing candidates for the Ministry.

In a few months he had an additional satisfaction in the arrival of Schade as his assistant, the same Schade who had worked so well with Francke at Leipsic, and was now prepared to do the same at Berlin. He was on excellent terms also with the rest of his colleagues in the Ministry, so that everything seemed to be prospering, and he was little inclined to think seriously of an invitation to return to Dresden at the death of the Elector of Saxony in September.

These fourteen years, spent at Berlin in honoured labour for the Church of God, might indeed have formed a pleasant and peaceful



ending to a life of toil and struggle, if Spener could have closed his eyes and ears to events which were occurring in other places. But his departure from Saxony did not put an end to the disturbances connected with Pietism. Rather it seemed to be the signal for a more open and outrageous series of assaults. From every quarter there came to Berlin news of hot discussions, angry controversies, fierce contentions; and Spener's name was at the centre of the whole. To be a friend of his, to sympathize with him, to have caught his spirit in the least degree, and to work after his manner, was enough to bring upon any man the reproach of heresy, and to make him a mark for scorn and persecution. And his heart bled for the Christian community at large, and the troubles and temptations of others, though not for himself.

But whatever might be the violence of the storm which was raging around him, Spener continued calmly and steadily in his own path of duty, allowing no opportunity to pass by of cheering and encouraging those who were in the midst of the battle, or of beginning any new work of blessing in his own immediate sphere. Within two or three years after his settling at Berlin, his heart was rejoiced by an event which had been all his life the

object of his longing desire, but which he had never ventured to hope that he would live to see accomplished, the foundation of a new University, in which the Theological faculty was from the beginning to be shaped in accordance with his views, and subject to influences with which he warmly sympathized. Wittenberg and Jena were the old-established Protestant Universities of Germany, and though they represented different schools of Theology, and the one was somewhat less stiffly orthodox than the other, yet both of them were thoroughly imbued with the spirit against which Spener was all his life contending, the worship of dead formal systems of opinion, to the exclusion, or at least the deadening, of the living power of the Gospel. Since the days of Calixtus, Helmstadt had become the representative and the nucleus of the syncretistic teaching. If only a University could be founded or established, which should be a centre of Spener's own teaching, and a nursery of preachers of the Gospel in the Pietistic spirit, great results might be expected to follow. As matters stood, students for the Lutheran ministry in Brandenburg were compelled, for want of a University nearer home, to resort to the Saxon school of Wittenberg, and they came back, bringing

with them its petrified system and fossil Theology.

Now, however, there was a hope of better things. Thomasius, who has already been mentioned as a courageous advocate of Spener, at a time when it required no little boldness to speak in his favour, had been compelled to leave the uncongenial soil of Saxony, and had settled at Halle, in the territory of Brandenburg. He began to teach in the Riding School of that town, and his lectures on Philosophy and Jurisprudence drew large numbers to hear him. After this had been going on for some time, the Elector of Brandenburg happened to pass through the place, and was struck afresh by an old idea, that Halle might be made an independent and successful seat of learning. Spener, as might be expected, did not let slip the opportunity of pressing with all his might the great advantage of founding a separate University within the Elector's dominions, the doubtful policy of entrusting the six thousand benefices of Brandenburg to persons all of whom were educated in a foreign country, and the false economy of allowing the large sums of money spent in education to flow through foreign channels instead of being kept at home.

At length he accomplished his purpose. A

regular University was founded at Halle. Breithaupt came the same year from Erfurt, and a few years after Anton came from Eisenach, to be Professors of Theology. Halle is now, in our own time, one of the most famous and most flourishing Universities of Prussia. Berlin and Bonn have been founded within the present century, but Halle has never lost its ground. Its dominant spirit has, as might have been expected, varied from time to time. Until the middle of the last century it continued to be the stronghold of the Pietistic school. Afterwards it fell into the hands of the so-called Rationalists, Gesenius and Wegscheider, who gave their own tone to its teaching, though even then its original character was sustained in the lectures of the venerable Knapp. More lately, within our own day, the Theological department has been under the direction of Tholuck, whose name is well known in England as an Evangelical Divine.

The immediate result, however, of the foundation of the new University was that, at last, a Theological School was in existence, to which Spener's old "*Pia Desideria*" did not apply, but which, from its very beginning, lived and moved and had its being in the spirit which he had been so long labouring

to kindle into life in the Church. Here he saw visibly realized, what in his most sanguine moments he had never ventured to hope for, from any existing University. Breithaupt, Anton, and Francke made the practical exegesis of Scripture, in its direct bearing upon Christian life, the head and front of their theological teaching. Philosophy was banished; the language of professional lectures was simple, unsophisticated, and free from technical terminology; controversial Theology was thrown completely into the background, and classes were held specially for the furtherance of practical piety. The new Professors preached exactly in Spener's own manner, and attacked the dominant abuses in the Church as boldly and plainly as he attacked them himself. The result was that a new generation of young theologians proceeded from Halle, who had a character peculiarly their own, distinguished from the students of other Universities, by a steadiness of conduct, a gravity of demeanour, and a more or less earnest devotion to their sacred calling.

The influence of Thomasius combined with that of Spener to stamp upon the new University a character of liberality in thought, teaching, and writing, which did not fail to earn for it, from the older seats of learning,

particularly from those of Electoral Saxony, the most unmitigated hostility, and the most active opposition. Pietists, Spenerianſ, Hal-lensians, very soon became synonymous terms of reproach. The opposite party, which assumed the title of the Orthodox, was headed by the University of Wittenberg, and a new storm broke out of hard names and bitter accusations. Halle was declared to be a seat of false doctrine, to have been founded for the destruction of the ecclesiastical constitution, to be a nest of fanatics, enthusiasts, and false prophets; and the Lutheran Communion throughout Germany was divided into two parties, which continued for more than half a century to tear one another in pieces with the bitterest animosity. The Theological Faculty of Wittenberg published a book under their formal authority, in which Spener was found guilty of two hundred and eighty-three separate errors. The book was written throughout in so passionate a spirit, that even one of Spener's opponents threw it aside in disappointment and indignation, crying, "Now at last you have put Spener in the right." In the midst of the storm the voice of Spener's old enemy, Carpzov, was still to be heard, shrieking the new charge of Spenerism, and crying out against the self-sent reformer, the tempest-

blast of the Church, the remorseless destroyer of the peace of the people of God. And as, at this time, several fanatical teachers did actually appear in various places, it was easy to mix them up in men's minds with the great founders of Pietism, Spener and Francke.

About this time too, in January, 1695, Francke began to publish, in monthly numbers, certain remarks upon passages of Scripture, in which he more than once took occasion to suggest an improvement in the Lutheran translation. After this the hue and cry became ten times worse than ever. The Pietists had now thrown off the mask; they were falsifying the Bible itself, and dragging even Luther himself from his throne. "Satan," said one of these defenders of the faith, "is labouring, under a pretence of devotion and holiness of life, to complete the destruction of the bewildered and tormented Church; men have already begun to think and speak lightly of the symbolical books of Lutheranism; already has the devil driven the Pietists to pick holes in Luther's translation, the Palladium of the Evangelical Church, and its chief armour of defence against the attacks of Popery." In vain did Francke, again and again, express in the strongest terms his

deep reverence for the name and teaching of Luther. No one would listen to him.

The charges of fanaticism, although, so far as Spener was himself concerned, they were wholly without foundation, were not altogether inventions of the enemy. Spener himself, both in his preaching, and in all his intercourse with others, seems to have diffused around him in great measure the same Christian calmness, and gentle earnestness, which characterized himself. But it was not so with all his followers. Even Francke's sermons do not appear to have been free from those exciting appeals to the feelings, and those efforts to influence the will through the nervous system, to which revivalist preachers so often have recourse. And he would everywhere find hearers peculiarly open to such influences. The heart and spirit of great numbers of persons revolted against the stiff and lifeless orthodoxy which was dominant at the time, and in many cases eagerly rushed into the opposite extreme of fanaticism and credulity. Tales were current everywhere throughout Germany of visions, revelations, visitations of angels, and appearances of the Redeemer. The writings of Jacob Böhme, and other mystics, were largely read and studied, and prophets and



prophetesses appeared in many places, claiming to have received special messages from heaven. The minds of great numbers of persons were in this way kept in a state of chronic tension and constant expectation, ready for receiving at any moment some supernatural communication. And when a person in this condition is exposed to the influence of fervid appeals to the feelings, made by an eloquent preacher, and weighted with the terrors of the world to come, it is only likely that the effect upon the nervous system will be of an unusual and startling character. In all this there was nothing which directly followed from Spener's teaching; no such effects seem ever to have resulted from sermons preached by himself; but it is easy to see how many points of contact there may have been between some of his genuine followers and the fanatical movements of the period; and how, although many of these so-called prophetesses were mere mad enthusiasts, there might be many others who were more or less intelligently influenced by his teachings, and sympathized with his work.

Of course the most varied opinions were current as to the nature and origin of these supernatural pretensions. The orthodox Theo-

logians of the day, disinclined to allow that there could be any good in anything, that bore the appearance of enthusiasm, pronounced them to be the result, either of conscious and deliberate imposture, or else of the direct agency of the devil. Others looked upon them as the nervous self-deception of a too vivid imagination. Others again acknowledged their pretension to be direct revelations from heaven. Spener was often appealed to for an opinion upon the subject. On the principle that the tree is known by its fruits, he in some few cases pronounced without hesitation that the so-called revelation was from beneath and not from above, whether it arose from the falsehood of man, or the direct inspiration of Satan. But with the charity which hopeth all things, and in accordance with his habitual principle of finding if possible some good in everything, he in most cases declined to give any decided opinion whatever. Such an answer as this was immediately seized upon by his opponents, and quoted as a proof that in heart and soul he sympathized with those whom he refused to join in condemning, and all the odium arising from the absurdities and blasphemies of others was heaped upon his head. Carpzov and his allies wrote book after book to prove that,

had it not been for Spener, the Church would never have been troubled with these ravening wolves, tearing and destroying the sheep; it was he who had deliberately opened the door of the fold, and invited the devil and his unclean host to enter in and take possession.

Great additional mischief was done by the interference of the civil power. In some few cases this was rendered necessary by the form assumed by local fanaticism interfering with law and order; but in most places the effervescence would probably have subsided of itself, and fanaticism would in a short time have been absorbed in a more healthy life, if edicts had not been issued by the civil authorities, which stirred into new activity the already existing elements of confusion, and confounded in one sweeping condemnation the clean with the unclean, the most hopeful evidences of life with the most fatal symptoms of disease. In this way the flame of evil was fanned in Saxony, Brunswick, Luneberg, Pomerania, and a large number of the smaller States of Germany. Brandenburg was, as usual, distinguished by the wise caution and large toleration of the Elector. Any abuse of one party by the other, any violent language used in public, was sternly suppressed; but religious liberty was left entirely untouched,

and the happiest results ensued. In other parts of Germany, persecution went very far beyond mere verbal abuse and contumely. Deposition from office, banishment from city and territory, were of frequent occurrence, besides the occasional violence and cruelty of excited mobs. Spener's own brother-in-law, Horbius, whom we have before seen in trouble at Strassburg, was almost literally harried to death. He was driven from Hamburg amid the abuse and violence of a crowd of the lowest of the people, and fled to a little property which he had lately bought in Holstein. But the city was still distracted by bloody conflicts in the streets, by uproar and murder. It was thought necessary to order Horbius's wife, Spener's sister, who had at first remained behind her husband, to leave the city with all that she possessed, within twenty-four hours. She found her husband worn out with anxiety and toil, and in a short time she was a widow.

Although all this, even so far as it was a result of Spener's life and labours, was no fault of his, but was only the shadow cast by the light which he had kindled, yet it could not but be a bitter trial to him to find that he had been the means of sending upon earth not peace, but a sword. It could not but

wound his sensitive nature to be the perpetual object of calumnious attacks, and to be mistaken by those whose character he respected, and whose opinion he valued. Those only who have tried the experiment know how bitter a thing it is to be mixed up in the minds of the good with what one most abhors, and to be identified in general estimation with practices which the heart despises and loathes.

Yet Spener never lost his presence of mind, and Christian wisdom; he never allowed his resentment or indignation to tempt him to follow the example of his assailants, and indulge in violent invective, or scornful recrimination. His tone was invariably gentle and moderate, patient and forgiving. This gentleness of spirit was often a source of greater irritation than ever to his adversaries. Without actually wresting his words, it was almost impossible to find a point of attack from which to assail him. By unwise words or hastiness of temper the Pietists frequently laid themselves open to a cutting sarcasm or a telling retort; but with Spener himself it was far more difficult to deal. His self-possession irritated, and his forbearance disarmed, those who opposed themselves. No tactics could have been more skilful, no policy

more wise. Yet Spener was no tactician, nor did he ever speak or write from motives of policy. The tone of his writing was merely the outward expression of the tone of his mind. He was never willing to think evil even of those who opposed themselves to him most unscrupulously. He lamented in secret the violence of temper, the fury of party spirit, which blinded the eyes of his adversaries, and made it impossible for them to judge fairly of his words or actions, but he never indulged in railing accusation against those who were the slaves of that temper, and carried away by that spirit of party. "I stedfastly believe," he said, "that as love is the sign and family likeness of the children of God, and the disciples of Christ, so is forgiveness the first and foremost fruit of love. And whenever I feel stirring within me any motion or impulse which is not of love, I seem to hear whispering in my ear the words of the Saviour, 'Ye know not what spirit ye are of.'" A spirit which in this way strengthened itself at the innermost wellsprings of Christian life, must needs be raised in great measure above the pain of personal vexation. Spener's peace was so deeply seated, the joy of his heart had its sources so far within, that the worst trials from without seemed but to

touch him for a moment, and never to shake the foundation of his abiding gladness.

The polemical works which circumstances compelled him to write were composed with the same cheerfulness as his books of a different kind, and meanwhile he rejoiced that time still remained for the work upon which his whole heart was set, the furtherance of practical piety in others. There was indeed one bitter pain which afflicted this faithful soldier of Christ throughout his life, the pain of seeing the Church of God maimed and bleeding at so many wounds, and of feeling the opposition unceasingly made by human passion and prejudice, to thwart his efforts for the attainment of a better state of things. But he never allowed even this distress to bow down his spirit, or to weaken his active energy in the cause of truth. "Whoever," he said, "can look without emotion upon the pitiable condition of the Church only proves that he is no true son of that mother whose misery does not touch his heart. At the same time, although the sight of this all but universal corruption must in a measure sadden the spirit, it should encourage us to more fervent prayer than ever, and should never be allowed to weaken or cast down the cheerfulness of faith and lively hope, which arise

from a firm and abiding trust in the watchful care of our heavenly Father over all His children."

Another affliction, the last and, as he considered it himself, the hardest to bear in all Spener's life, remains still to be mentioned. It will help to complete the picture of the condition of the Lutheran Communion. At the time of the Reformation, the practice of auricular confession, in the form in which it had previously existed, was disused; and there was substituted in its place a private and voluntary mode of confession, intended to give the minister an opportunity of becoming more closely acquainted with the spiritual condition of the members of his flock, and of giving a word of warning or encouragement, according to the necessities of each individual. With this object in view, Luther earnestly pressed the continuance of confession, though he did not make it a necessary preliminary to the reception of the Lord's Supper. It was invariably followed by a solemn priestly absolution pronounced by the minister. This speedily degenerated into a more outward form, and became a fruitful source of evils analogous to those attending auricular confession in the Church of Rome.



During the whole period of Spener's residence at Frankfort he was contending against these evils. He complained loudly and bitterly that the chair of confession was a misery and a martyrdom to every minister of the Gospel who made a conscience of his sacred calling. For he was compelled to declare the forgiveness of sins to persons whom in his heart he believed to be unworthy and impenitent, and in this way he only helped to harden men in their sinful courses. Absolution itself he declared to be no invention of man, but an ordinance of God, by which persons who have fallen into sin may be reconciled with God, and with the Church, and receive inward consolation and strength. But the existing practice, according to which each person, at a stated time, made his confession, and as a matter of course received absolution, as a preliminary to receiving the Lord's Supper, was a mere custom of the Church, which had its origin indeed in the best intentions, but had in practice become a source of widespread evil rather than good. It had been his own earnest desire that it should in no place be left to the minister alone to determine who should be admitted to the Lord's Supper, but that there should be a council of Elders, upon whom, in conjunction

with the minister, should rest the responsibility of excluding the unworthy from communion. As in most places it was not possible to establish such a council, the only course remaining was that preachers, in their sermons, should labour repeatedly and earnestly to impress upon their hearers that the repentance of the heart was a necessary condition of true and effectual absolution; and that without this the words of absolution, and the partaking of the Supper itself were a mere outward form which would convey no blessing to the soul.

The question was further complicated by the admixture of lower motives. The "confessional penny," or Confessor's fees paid on each occasion, made it the minister's interest that the practice should be as universal as possible, so that the love of filthy lucre in some, combined with habitual prejudice in others, tended strongly to keep up the existing state of things, and any amendment or alteration seemed entirely beyond hope.

But, however strong might be the feeling of individuals, little general attention was drawn to the subject, and the ordinary course of things would have continued undisturbed, had not Schade, who was now Spener's as-

sistant at Berlin, felt himself called upon to take active measures. A conscience morbidly sensitive, and a disposition naturally inclined to melancholy, were serious hindrances to the usefulness of one, who in hearty self-devotion, earnestness of purpose, and unwearied activity in the service of God, was equalled by few. This matter of private confession, with the absolution expected, as a matter of course, by all who came to confess, was a constant burden upon his spirit. From Friday, when the intending communicants came to give their names, till Sunday, when the Lord's Supper was celebrated, he knew no rest or peace, and Saturday night was always one of sleepless misery. At last he could bear it no longer, but rushed into print, and published two pamphlets, one after another, which startled and horrified even Spener himself by the strength and intensity of the feeling which they showed. "Trouble not yourselves," he wrote, "to heap together all sorts of passages of Scripture out of Luther, and to search your old and new divines to hunt up proofs that the confessional is sometimes of use, and so to keep up your trade, your means of gain, your Diana by which you have your wealth. Perhaps I know as much of all this as you know yourselves, and I know that the rare

and accidental blessing cannot make up for the thousandth part of the irretrievable mischief. Thank God, my own knowledge, and my own experience, enable me to laugh to scorn this tricking out and adorning of superstition and soul-murder. I have seen with my eyes, and heard with my ears, and nothing can deceive me. Praise it who will. I say that the chair of the confessional is the chair of Satan ; it is the lake of fire." Language like this could produce nothing but mischief. Uproar and confusion were the immediate result. As soon as he read the pamphlet Spener hastened to get it, if possible, suppressed. But it was too late. It was already in the hands of multitudes, and Schade added fuel to the flame by immediately giving up receiving confession in private. He assembled his intending communicants in the sacristy of the Church ; a general confession was made by all together, and he dismissed them with the absolution and the blessing pronounced upon the whole number collectively. This arbitrary introduction of a change in the custom of the Church, solely on the authority of an individual minister, could be justified by none, and would open the door to any amount of anarchy and confusion. Spener forbade the continuance of this innovation,

and Schade obeyed, but abstained altogether for the future from receiving confessions.

But the matter, once stirred, was not so easily laid to rest, and even Schade's death, which occurred when the excitement was at its height, had no effect in calming men's passions. On the one side a large party had been demanding his immediate dismissal from his post, and were still complaining loudly of the insult which had been cast upon Lutheran traditions, and the daring innovations made by individual ministers in the ceremonies of the Church. On the other side men rushed into the opposite extreme, and cried out that now at last the spell was broken, the mask was torn off, and the confessional proclaimed to be no means of salvation, but the chief of Satan's snares. Such a practice, they declared, ought to be abolished at once and for ever. Of all this violence there had not been the slightest indication beforehand. It was the sudden outbreak of a storm in the midst of a clear sky. As if a lightning-stroke had set a forest in flames, the conflagration spread far and wide. It was well that it was kindled, and had its centre, in the territory of Brandenburg. The disturbance was so great that the Elector was compelled to interfere in the interests of order ; but he interfered with his

usual prudence. He first issued a commission of inquiry, and at length gave his final decision that private confession should be optional. It should be open, as before, to those who wished to avail themselves of it, while those to whom it was a stumbling-block might receive the Communion without it; only on the condition that their names were sent to the minister the previous week, that he might have an opportunity of repelling them if circumstances rendered such a step necessary.

External Church discipline has so completely ceased among ourselves that such questions as these belong to a state of things which we of the Church of England now can scarcely comprehend. As little can we understand, or should we be disposed to tolerate, the interference of the civil power to settle such a question arbitrarily by the mere exercise of its sovereign authority. Yet this was in Germany the normal and regular state of things, resulting from peculiar circumstances at the period of the Reformation, from which we cannot be too thankful that England was free. In matters of Church Government, and all that relates to the regular order and peaceful development of Church life, the changes made in England at the time of the

Reformation were comparatively slight, and the Reformation itself was gradual, and, in this respect, almost free from violent oscillations; while, on the other hand, the changes made in Church rites and usages, and the details of ceremonial, were comparatively wide and sweeping. The Lutheran Communion, on the contrary, presents a picture exactly the reverse of this. The changes made in rites and ceremonies were slight and comparatively unimportant, while those which affected government and order, and the continuous progress of organic life, were often violent and always great.

The controversies which were continually going on between Spener and his opponents were by no means confined within the sphere of dogmatic theology, or the means of directly furthering the spiritual life, but extended themselves to questions of political and social conduct. We have already had occasion to observe that the Pietists were in the habit of keeping themselves aloof from certain pleasures which they considered to be worldly, and in all their external demeanour maintained a simplicity which was directly at variance with ordinary custom. It would have been strange if these practices had escaped notice, or if they had failed to receive from the opposite

party the brand of heresy. But it was towards the end of Spener's life, and during his residence in Berlin, that the differences of opinion upon this subject first flamed up into a distinct and general controversy. It was distinguished from the multitude of already existing controversies which were distracting men's minds in Germany by its subject matter, the *Adiaphora*, or *things indifferent*. The points in dispute were innumerable. Dancing, playing cards, going to the theatre, dinner parties, dressing according to the fashion of the day, jesting, conversation, taking walks for pleasure, reading novels and newspapers, with a thousand indifferent matters of daily life, were made subjects of separate discussion, and of strong condemnation, or strong approval, according to the side adopted by the writer. Some of them were points upon which Christian men have at all times agreed to differ; others startle one by their exceeding puerility, and remind one of the minute rules of monasticism, which, for the sake of an artificial holiness, destroyed all the freshness and bloom of human life, and thought to honour God by refusing to accept and admire the flowers with which He beautifies our path on earth and makes it fragrant.

This strict and stern view of life is usually



characteristic of religious revivals, and had marked the progress of Pietism from its commencement. Spener had long ago published three sermons on "The forbidden love of the world," and had enforced in the preface the absolute necessity of entire separation from the ordinary pleasures of life. There was certainly much to urge him to this extreme, even if it had not been, as it was, the natural tendency of his character. For a rigid orthodoxy in things religious was currently supposed to make up for very considerable laxity in daily life; and the customs of society in his time were such as to make a man like Spener suspicious of the doctrine that things may be, and are, indifferent in themselves and neither good nor bad, acquiring a moral character from circumstances, and from the spirit in which they are done.

Yet Spener was blamed by many for excessive liberality. He was willing to admit that a pun or a joke, the wearing of a wig, the drinking of a health, might under some circumstances be allowable, and he refused unconditionally either to praise or to blame. And in the same spirit he judged the two social pleasures which have always seemed to form the frontier line, between the stricter and more elastic schools of Christian morality, viz. danc-

ing and visiting the theatre. With reference to the first, we have seen what he was in his early youth. He had been taught to avoid dancing as a distinct sin and snare of the devil, and he never could forget the remorse with which his conscience tortured him at twelve years old, after having taken part in this amusement. Yet he had no desire to refuse to others the liberty which he did not feel that he could allow to himself. He admitted in his riper years that he could discover nothing necessarily sinful in the practice; and he even recommended that it should be taught to young persons, on account of the healthful exercise and the graceful action which it imparted to the body.

But, however innocent dancing might be in itself, he was very far from approving it as it was ordinarily practised. Experience, he thought, plainly showed that the ordinary ball and dancing party nearly always gave occasion to every kind of lightness and frivolity, which, even at its best, was inconsistent with the seriousness becoming a Christian. "Christians," he said, "are commanded to do all to the glory of God, all in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to avoid all appearance of evil, to wage perpetual war with the love of this world. Is it easy to imagine all this in

the moral atmosphere of a dancing party?" At the same time he had no sympathy with those who were content with a mere prohibition of such pleasures, as if the mere abstaining from dancing were in itself a good work and pleasing to God. What he desired was that men's hearts should be tuned too high for them to take delight in such things, and that the constant feeding on the bread of heaven should make them impatient of the husks of earth. Till they had had a taste of heavenly joy, the mere command to abstain from earthly pleasures, a command of which as yet they would not understand the meaning, would only tend to drive them further than ever from the Kingdom of God.

So about going to the theatre. "A theatrical representation is a thing in which I confess I never could take the least pleasure. As theatres are commonly conducted, there can be no question that sin is indissolubly mixed up with them, and, although this arises almost entirely from surrounding circumstances, I cannot help reckoning them, for this reason, with dancing parties, and the other pleasures of this world. But if I am asked to prove from the word of God that they are sinful in themselves, I confess that I am as little able to do this, as I can

take upon myself to establish the contrary. On the whole, I have no fundamental objection to bring against them except the loss of precious time, the opportunity which they give to the evil one, and just now the distracted and unhappy condition of the Church, which makes one wish to be more moderate than usual in the use even of things which are lawful in themselves." At another time, in a letter to a friend, he candidly acknowledged that a certain tragedy of the poet Gryphius had acted as no small spur to him in the right path, and that, if all plays were like that, he would be able to pass a much more favourable judgement upon them. All this is, no doubt, onesided and sectarian in its principle; it ignores the essential excellence of art, and acknowledges no good whatever in that which has not for its immediate object the distinct and direct furtherance of morality and spiritual religion. But it is at all events much more healthy than the opposite extreme, which judges things solely from an aesthetic point of view, and leaves entirely out of count their effect upon the moral and spiritual life.

But all Spener's followers did not imitate his moderation. They not only held and expressed strong views on the subject of the

Adiaphora, but they endeavoured with a high hand to impose their views upon others. An instance of this occurred in Altenburg, where Crassel, the minister of the place, assumed on his own authority to exclude from the Lord's Supper all persons who would not promise to abstain for ever from dancing. This step caused such disturbance that Crassel was deprived of his office; but similar strong measures were taken by other Pietist ministers in various places, and this naturally only served to embitter the opposite side more than ever. Preachers began to declaim from the pulpit against the Pietistic view of things indifferent, and to assert that the free use of them was the precious inheritance of the Lutheran Church. Dancing and frequenting the theatre came soon to be looked upon as tests, without which a person's orthodoxy was liable to be questioned, and in Saxony a preacher of high position issued forms of prayer specially adapted to card-players.

In the midst of all these innumerable controversies, and himself the centre of them, Spener grew old, and became grey-headed. One of his latest works was to arrange and publish the memorials and letters which he had written from time to time, in answer to questions which had been put to him on the

various subjects which agitated the Church during his life. They were published at Halle, and filled four quarto volumes. A glance at this publication is sufficient to show the wide circuit which the work of his life had embraced. This book contains not only the richest store of materials not only for a history of Spener's life, but for that of the Lutheran Communion while he lived; for nothing of any moment had occurred without reference to him; and, besides matters of public import, the book is rich in the records of individual experience, and in directions for the guidance of the spiritual life.

Quietly, and in comparative peace, his life glided towards its close. In the most literal sense of the words every one of his days was a visible exhibition in practice of the Christian principle "work and pray." As soon as he rose in the morning, and before he lighted his candle, he did what he used to say could be done very well without a light, he kneeled down and prayed by himself alone. Afterwards the whole household was assembled for morning prayer and intercession. Dinner and supper were in like manner consecrated and closed with prayer. Sometimes he used first to read a chapter of the Bible, and a hymn was sung by all together; and in-

variably the day was ended by a prayer offered by the whole family in common. His own solitary prayer was, to a large extent, intercession for others ; and those who had a share in it were so numerous that he was obliged to arrange them according to the country or province in which each was living, and in this way remember them, name by name, before God ; for some he prayed once in a week, for others oftener, for many every day, for his closest friends three times in a day.

But the most remarkable thing about him was the many-sided, sustained, and unintermitting activity which he displayed. It was only rendered possible by the unusual strength of his bodily and mental constitution, supported by a regular and simple mode of life. A clear, penetrating understanding, a sound judgement which, without losing sight of general principles, was always able to grasp the circumstances of a particular case, a quick, retentive and faithful memory, were favoured in their action by a marvellous repose of spirit, which was almost peculiar to himself. Neither hope nor fear, nor any of the passions which disturb the minds of ordinary men, had any power to shake his peace. It was sustained by fervent prayer,

which he was accustomed to call the truth of the spirit's life, and by perfect self-surrender to the will of God.

He enjoyed almost unbroken bodily health, and only two or three times in his life he knew what it was to have his night's rest disturbed, and on those occasions it was anxiety for the Church's welfare that kept him awake. He rose on ordinary days at half-past five, on Sundays at four o'clock in the morning, and spent the whole forenoon in whatever work he had in hand. The afternoon was given up to receiving the numerous applicants for his guidance and advice, and while conversing with them he always either stood or walked. Beyond this he took no exercise in the day. On three nights in the week he supped alone in his own room, to save the time which would otherwise be spent in unnecessary conversation. Sunday afternoons he mostly spent in visiting the country churches which were subject to his inspection, but he always had a book for his companion to read on the way.

Probably no one ever excelled him in the economy of time. Every portion of every day had its particular work assigned to it beforehand, and his plan was never altered except from absolute necessity. In dress, and



in all other matters of daily life, he practised the utmost simplicity, without the least touch of luxury or outward show. He rarely and reluctantly accepted invitations, but when in society his conversation was cheerful and hearty, though serious and grave.

His excellent constitution exempted him to a great extent from bodily suffering. But his life was not without bitter trials, of which perhaps the chief was the death of his two sons, one of whom was Professor of Mathematics at Halle, and the other a candidate for the Ministry in Livonia. He bore this blow with the Christian resignation which might have been expected of him. He was a sympathizing friend, a father to the poor and needy, who never left him unconsolated, a gentle ruler of those who were placed under him, a faithful colleague of those who had to work with him, a pattern of every kind of household virtue, as a loving husband, and a firm but affectionate father.

But his most striking characteristic, and that which set the crown upon all his other virtues, was the unfeigned humility which shone forth in all his words and actions. When he heard himself praised, he wondered what people could find in him to value so highly, for in himself he could discern nothing

that was praiseworthy. He was never ashamed openly to acknowledge any shortcomings of his own, and sometimes he begged his people with tears to tell him of his failings. When they did so, he received the admonition with humility and thanks, whether it came from rich or poor. There was nothing he more disliked to hear than that his name or his writings had been mentioned by preachers in the pulpit, and when his admirers were anxious to give him some title of honour he positively refused to allow it. It was with the greatest difficulty that he could be persuaded to allow his picture to be taken, and when at last he did so, it was out of charity to a pious painter who was in difficulties. In the same way he expressly ordered in his will that no funeral panegyric should be pronounced at his interment.

Such was the valiant soldier of Christ, the greatest hero of the Lutheran Communion since the days of the Reformation, the good and faithful servant, worthy to be reckoned among the noblest who have laboured in the vineyard of their Lord. His earnest, active life, stirred as it was by many a storm which raged around it, still on the whole was like a softly flowing stream, reflecting from its surface the likeness of Christ; and now, when he was old

and greyheaded, in the seventieth year of his earthly pilgrimage, he looked back with thankful joy upon the signs of heavenly grace with which the days that were past were strewn, and awaited in quietness and confidence the summons to his everlasting rest.

In the beginning of June, 1704, he preached in the Castle of Lichtenberg, before his friend and patroness, the widowed Electress Palatine, and the subject of his sermon was the mighty difference which distinguished the death of the believer from that of the children of this world. A few days afterwards he sat down to write a letter to a friend but a sudden faintness made it impossible to proceed. Many symptoms combined to show that it was the beginning of the end, but, in the midst of severe bodily pain, he learned to say with the Apostle that the more the outward man decayed, so much the more the inward man was renewed day by day. He summoned to his bedside his colleagues of St. Nicolas and solemnly took leave of them; and he sent a farewell letter to the Elector, who had now attained the royal dignity, and was King of Prussia, earnestly commending the Church of God, and particularly the University of Halle, to his care. Feeling himself close to eternity he declined all bodily refreshment, and begged

those around him to sing for him the two hymns, "Ich ruf zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ," and "Allein zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ." After this every word that he uttered referred to his speedy dissolution. In life he had striven to live peaceably with all men, and he was anxious now to leave the world in the same spirit of forgiveness. "Thank God," he cried, "there is no man on earth who can call me his enemy." His wife replied, "and those who have shown themselves your enemies you forgive, and ask God to change their hearts." "Yes, indeed," he answered, "from my very heart I do."

He particularly begged that his body might not be covered with a black garment, nor the coffin decked with black. He had mourned enough, he said, over the Church during his lifetime; now that he was entering into the Church triumphant, he wished to be clothed in a white robe, to show that he departed hence in the hope of better days even for the Church on earth.

The evening before his death, he had the seventeenth chapter of St. John read to him three times over. He had always loved to fix his thoughts upon this "Prayer of the High Priest," though a feeling of reverence for the deep mystery of its meaning had made it seem

to him impossible to preach upon it. Afterwards he fell into a deep sleep, which lasted till towards morning. When he awoke, he took some refreshment, and then passed quietly away from the things of time. It was Sunday, the 5th of February, 1705.

His body was not buried, according to custom, in the Church, but in a spot in the churchyard chosen by himself. Thousands of persons were present at his funeral, and the sermon preached in his memory was upon a text which he himself had selected—"If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness."

The bitterness of party spirit pursued him after death. Those who had reviled and set themselves against him during his lifetime could not bear to hear it said that he had entered into the everlasting rest. What had a heretic to do with rest? One of his enemies, Dr. Fecht, of Rostock, deserves to have his name recorded, as that of one who wrote a learned dissertation to prove that Spener could not possibly have entered into the joy of his Lord. But a life like his could never be quenched in death. He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. His voice might for a time be drowned in the strife of tongues,

and his work might for a while be hidden amid the confusions of the times, but in a few years his name was to be venerated even upon earth. Thirty years after his death he was looked upon in the Lutheran Communion as a hero, to whom her wisest and greatest looked back with thankfulness and admiration. It was then beginning to be plainly seen, and deeply felt, that from the days of the Reformation onwards, no one had left such a mark upon men's minds as he, no one had given such a mighty impulse to Christian life. The whole tone of thought and feeling upon religious subjects had changed.

The chief external cause of this altered aspect of things was the great influence of the new University of Halle, from which thousands of students had now passed into the ministry, bearing with them wherever they went the impress of Spener's teaching and Spener's life, and stirring men's hearts through the whole of Lutheran Germany.

Another cause was the multitude of pupils who were now issuing, year after year, from Francke's Orphanhouse, and other institutions at Halle. And the good work was still further promoted by the increasing activity of the Canstein Bible Society, which was founded in 1712 by the Baron von Canstein,

an intimate friend of Spener and Francke, and which is still carrying on its work of blessing.

It is true that Spener's immediate followers did little more than imitate his mode of action, and carry out the suggestions which he made, but in the next generation there arose others who, with wider views and more extended learning, applied his principles and spread far and wide the teaching which was their natural result, but who, if the seed had not been already sown by him, would scarcely themselves have been what they were; such men as Buddæus, Baumgarten, Mosheim.

To estimate the value of Spener's labours, one need only cast a glance at the state of the Lutheran Communion in his boyhood, and another at what it was a single generation after his death.

And yet its after history only deepens our conviction of the grievous harm and loss which is sustained by any community of Christian people, which endeavours to establish for itself an independent existence, breaking its continuity with the past, and making for itself a new beginning, based not upon Apostolic order, but upon individual faith. In the Lutheran Communion there are to be found many noble examples of indi-

vidual Christian life, but of corporate life there is scarcely a sign. We are often reminded of the refreshing truth that the Holy Spirit of God breathes where He will, and works mightily in every heart which opens itself to receive His influence, so that even in the wilderness waters break out, and streams in the desert; but we cannot fail also to mark, that where the appointed channels of grace have been rejected and lost, there is no provision remaining for its regular and continuous flow.

The impulse given by Spener to Christian life in Germany was very great for more than one generation after his death, and its effects are visible still; yet not in a form which he would rejoice to see. As the faith of Luther stiffened into Lutheranism, so the life of Spener has in great measure stiffened into Spenerism.

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